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THEODORE F. THIEME
A MAN AND HIS TIMES

By
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AUTHOR OF

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK, A. LINCOLN, LA SALLE,
THE OLD FAUNTLEROY HOME, AND THE LABYRINTH

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Theodore F. Thieme, from the Portrait by Rundalzoff in 1921.

THEODORE F. THIEME
A MAN AND HIS TIMES

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PREFACE

The main content of this book consists of data taken from contemporary source material or acquired by direct contact. Mr. Thieme's assistance has been invaluable in confirming correctness of detail. The copious excerpts from his diaries, manuscripts, and speeches are reproduced here as they were recorded at the time. These should be read to the last word. They comprise the vital content of the book—the "milk in the cocoanut," to employ an expression Mr. Thieme often uses.

It is a pleasure to praise the newswapers of Fort Wayne for the fidelity and detail with which their files reflect current events of the past sixty years. It will be noted that much of this history has been taken from the columns of the *Journal Gazette, Sentinel,* and *News.* This is contemporary history of very high character.

It is a matter of regret both to Mr. Thieme and to me that it has not been possible to make adequate mention of the legions of associates who have played important parts in all stages of his career. He would be proud to be known by "the company he has kept."

The friends and associates of his earlier days have nearly all passed away. It is hoped that the large numbers still living who have known him in his later activities will see their own proper place in these annals. I acknowledge gratefully the assistance that many of them have given in the preparation of this book. I must acknowledge also the extensive aid received from my sons, Shockley and Ross, Jr.

Ross F. Lockridge

ROSS F. LOCKRIDGE

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Introductory	xi
I	Early Years	3
II	Apprentice and Collegian	13
III	Wanderlust	19
IV	Pharmacist	28
V	Seeking New Fields	40
VI	Building a New American Industry	51
VII	Profit Sharing and Welfare	85
VIII	Travel	103
IX	Civic Awakening	116
X	A State-Wide Crusade	126
XI	The Union and the Strike	150
XII	The Morris Plan	168
XIII	The Fort Wayne Art School and Museum	173
XIV	Farewell to Industry	185
XV	Retirement	196

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Theodore F. Thieme . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Facing Page

Theo. F. Thieme at Eighty-four XI

Frederick J. Thieme Family Group 3

J. G. Thieme & Bro. Clothing Manufacturers . . 6

Theo. F. Thieme Drug Store 28

Fort Wayne Bicycle Club Picnic 34

The Style of the Elegant Eighties 35

Wayne Knitting Mills at St. Louis World's Fair . 74

Wayne Knitting Mills, East Branch 80

Knit 81

Board of Directors Dinner
Factory Knitting Room
Factory Looping Room 84

Textile Industrial Club 92

Club House Dining Room 93

Pioneer Club
Saxonia Singing Society
Trustee Benefit Society 102

Fishing Group at Northern Minnesota Lakes . . 108

Tablet of River Improvement 122

Fort Wayne Art School Evening Class
Morris Plan 172
Fort Wayne Art School 173
An Early Knitting Machine
Modern Full Fashioned Knitting Machine . . 192
Theme Hosiery Co.
Latest Full Fashioned Knitting Machines . . . 193
Thieme Gardens—Entrance Gate 208
Thieme Gardens—Sunken Garden 209

Theo. F. Thieme, at age of eighty-four, in his Los Angeles office.

INTRODUCTORY

He was sitting upright at his desk in his well-kept office at 802 Quinby Building, Los Angeles, California. It was the first time I had seen him for about ten years, but he looked the same. As he swung about in his swivel chair with easy alertness, it was hard to realize that he had recently celebrated his eighty-third birthday.

Rising nimbly to his feet, he extended his hand with the quick clasp that always distinguished him. His countenance beamed with the same cordial smile, and he held himself erect and stepped about with supple dignity. The years had wrought little apparent change in his comeliness and ease of bearing. Carefully groomed, as was always his wont, he was the same dapper personage that I first knew more than a quarter of a century ago. There was a slight difficulty in his hearing, but I would have recognized his mildly expressive voice anywhere as he spoke in his usual quick, quiet tones.

As I noted his sprightly step and confident bearing and his erect, compact figure—five feet five, weight about 150, with unusually strong shoulders, well proportioned to chest and head—I felt the singular propriety of the friendly appellation of "Little Napoleon," which I had heard applied to him in the days of his masterful activity.

Such was Mr. Theodore F. Thieme as I saw him on March 14, 1940, when I came to tell him that it was my purpose to write the story of his life.

"So you think you can write a history of me, do you?" he asked with a smile. "Let's see," he continued, "how long have you known me? About twenty-six years I guess—ever since 1914." Then he made a reckoning of the time

in which we had worked together intimately, eight years all told.

"Those were busy years," he added, "and we had some very active work together in the knitting mill, the Citizens' League of Indiana and the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum. Well, I believe you can write me up if anybody can. Ask me anything you want to."

Pulling open some of the drawers of his desk, he remarked, "I have some data here that you should use—scrapbooks and a diary, with many documents and pamphlets that I will turn over to you if you wish. Of course, I can't let you see my diary," he added quickly as he picked up a small, well-worn leather-bound book which was labeled Number 1.

"I am afraid it is a little too personal. I have kept a more or less intimate diary ever since 1880. But I can give you excerpts from it that may be helpful."

Thus we made a preliminary start on this important project which was the main reason for my first trip to California.

"So you have never been here before," he observed. "We must see to it that you get a good view of this wonderland while you are here."

"What do you think of the climate?" he asked.

It was a delightful day. California was coming up to specifications on climate—all the more impressive as I had just come through a realm of cold and snow.

Again he sat at his desk. Leaning back easily in his chair, he began to ruminate and to tell over reminiscences, all in a very light and more or less humorous vein.

First, he made mention of his boyhood days in Fort Wayne, running back to the period of the old canal. He remembered clearly having seen boats pass up and down back of Columbia Street, near his father's store. They did not cease running entirely until about 1874, when he was seventeen years of age. He remembered an old canal boat skipper, Captain Cook, who lived in a house adjoining his

father's home and who was a friend of the family. Many vivid tales of old canal days had come to the wide-awake boy from the interesting old captain.

He mentioned humorous incidents of his school days, especially in Concordia College where he was sent to be educated for the ministry.

"That was my mother's idea," he chuckled, "but it wasn't mine. I wanted to be a musician. I loved to play on the organ and piano."

Then his mind quickly wandered to his two years in New York City as a student in the college of pharmacy. His memories recalled only humorous associations.

In ready reminiscence he then entered with delight upon his first wonderful year in Europe before he settled down to business. Vivid memories of those happy days passed through his mind. He recalled principally his congenial associations in Dresden and Leipzig where he fraternized with a group of rollicking American students with whom he enjoyed many a song and many a round of conviviality.

And so I saw him, bearing his years lightly, his mind given entirely to agreeable retrospection, in this first interview concerning his life story. There was no thought or mention of the strenuous struggles, the disappointments and tragedies, or the triumphant successes of his notable career.

He was thinking only of pleasing personal recollections that survived in his milder fancies rather than of the serious aspects of his life that were recorded in the substantial data which he was prepared to furnish me and with much of which I was already familiar.

Luncheon time came, and with the zest of a pleasure-loving youth, he took me to a choice place to eat and drink, a French cafe where the service was quite distinctive. I found him to be still the same connoisseur of the best foods. Although never a gourmet, he had always been selective in gastronomic enjoyments, and I was pleased to see that he still relished this practice.

During the few days of our extended interview he chose many different places for luncheon and dinner, each having some distinctive merit—"The choicest sea-foods, the best chicken dinners in the world, the finest steaks and chops on earth." He expressed amusement at the extravagance of these bold, California claims, but he evidently believed that they were justified. He ordered suitable beverages adapted to the food with wise and temperate taste.

On one of these occasions at a popular refreshment place where there was a great deal of miscellaneous drinking and some fashionable gambling, he remarked:

"Some of these good people don't know how to get the good out of drinking. They drink too much and don't use good selection. I have enjoyed good beer and the best of wines all my life," he added thoughtfully, "but have never used whiskey. I'm glad I'm not a whiskey drinker."

Noting the poker table and especially the slot machines into one of which a prominent broker of his acquaintance was feeding half dollars rapidly—some forty or more in a few minutes—he said with a good deal of emphasis:

"That is something I don't take any stock in. I have never gambled any at all. Don't forget to make note of that," he concluded with a smile.

"What games do you like, Mr. Thieme?" I asked.

"Baseball and golf," he answered quickly. "I began playing baseball at Concordia College, and I still go to the big league games here in Los Angeles, both day and night."

"How long have you played golf?"

"Ever since the game started in Fort Wayne," he responded proudly, "and I love to play it now. It is a wholesome, fresh air, sunshine sport."

Then followed drives and visits to high points of Los Angeles interest. He knew all the places. It is not the purpose of this treatise to exploit the glories of Los Angeles or my enjoyment of them. Nevertheless, the vivid appreciation and rare delight evinced by Mr. Thieme, for many years an enthusiastic sojourner in California, are worth

noting in this introduction. He showed intimate acquaintance with the fine colleges, libraries, galleries, museums, and observatories.

After a canvass of the L. A. Museum, especially the section devoted to prehistoric animals, he took me for a walk through La Brea Pits, and pointed out the very spots from which gigantic specimens of prehistoric life had been unearthed. We went to the Olympic Stadium and to the Hollywood Bowl. We went through Beverly Hills and saw the beautiful homes that adorn this section. He pointed out the imposing features of the Biltmore and the Ambassador and entertained me at the palatial clubs, Jonathan, Wilshire and Del Mar Beach, of which he is a member.

We drove through miles and miles of orange groves and vineyards, stopping occasionally to acquire some of the choice fruit. We went to the Orange Show at San Bernardino and enjoyed a sumptuous dinner in the old Mission Inn at Riverside, where he took vast delight in calling attention to the incomparable display of artistic and historical collections that had been made by his friend, Mr. Miller, who passed away some years ago, leaving this unique institution in charge of his capable son-in-law.

There were drives through the mountains and along the beach. We took a good look at the American navy at Long Beach and at Catalina Island. Mr. Thieme was a veritable mine of pointed information concerning all of this wide range of California associations. Occasionally, we were attended by the cultured and charming Mrs. Thieme, who seemed to derive from these associations a quiet enjoyment that matched the more enthusiastic interest of her husband. Some years younger than he, she enjoys good health and the best of social spirit. We had a delightful dinner with her at the Wilshire Country Club, where Mr. Thieme plays golf twice a week, and where he and his wife enjoy regular dinners together.

With many chuckles he told the story of an aged couple

who began considering where they would spend their last days. He recited it somewhat as follows:

The old man said, "Look here, Ma, we're getting pretty old and before long one of us is apt to pass away."

"Yes," she answered, "and when that happens I want to go and spend my last days in California."

It looks as if both he and Mrs. Thieme may hope for many more enjoyable years in California. However, he made it clear that they are only sojourning in California. Fort Wayne, Indiana, is still their home. He has always voted and paid taxes there.

We visited one of the large airports and watched with keen interest large airships arriving and leaving every half hour, to and from New York, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego and other points. It gave us a vision of the beginning of the new transportation system of the world.

Having led a very busy life, Mr. Thieme simply cannot bring himself to retire completely from the business atmosphere. And although his surroundings are adapted to ease and comfort, there is provided enough stimulating activity for real enjoyment of his declining years. A well furnished office, which is maintained in Los Angeles during his winter sojourn in California, furnishes an outlet for those business interests to which he still chooses to devote his attention. This office is in charge of an efficient secretary, Miss Dessie M. White, who has been with him for many years, and who combines bookkeeping, auditing, office correspondence, filing, and the correlation of financial data, into one interesting vocation. He enjoys frequent walks through the business and financial districts of Los Angeles, where he has many friends and acquaintances. Especially is he always welcome at the hosiery counters of the large department stores, where Wayne Knit and Theme Hosiery have been prominently featured for over forty years.

Mr. Thieme's limousine is in charge of an experienced chauffeur of Irish persuasion, who came from Terre Haute,

Indiana, a good many years ago. The chauffeur had acquired an intimate knowledge of Los Angeles and was easily encouraged by Mr. Thieme to tell what he knew about all points of interest as we sped along. With true California zeal and Celtic freedom, the chauffeur was rather superlative in his expressions and on one occasion pointed out "the busiest corner in the world," a statement to which Mr. Thieme took quick exception. He mentioned a corner in London and one in Paris which he believes still to surpass the busy corner in Los Angeles. The alert chauffeur remarked aside:

"The old man is quicker on the trigger than most men of fifty."

Concerning the superlatives of Los Angeles, Mr. Thieme remarked humorously that this region is noted for three unusual things: "waterless rivers, odorless flowers, and moneyless millionaires."

I think his greatest enjoyment was in visiting the Theme Hosiery Company, the handsome manufacturing plant which he helped to establish in Los Angeles sixteen years ago, just when he was retiring from active business. It is beautifully located in a new and growing part of Los Angeles, which was an outside suburb when the plant was built in 1924.

On our visit there, the president and manager, Mr. Fred H. Ranke, the superintendent, Mr. Harry C. Pfleger, and the treasurer and sales-manager, Mr. Charles H. Pidgeon, greeted us with great cordiality and recalled pleasantly the old days of the Wayne Knitting Mills, where Mr. Ranke and Mr. Pfleger both started as boys in their early teens under Mr. Thieme, shortly after he founded that original industry. They had grown up with the mills, and the mills had grown up with them. It was pleasing to note the successful issue of their training in the building and conduct of this modern plant in Los Angeles. It has not had a single bad year and has made money from the very start. Mr. Thieme remarked with a laugh,

"I guess the boys intend to lick the old man in money-making."

Besides the manager, superintendent, and treasurer, there were many other old associates of Mr. Thieme who had come from Fort Wayne to help conduct this new industry—notably, Miss Clara Miller, the experienced supervisor and forelady, who began with Mr. Thieme as a young girl about the time that Messrs. Ranke and Pfleger started as boys. So he saw with pride and pleasure in this plant the flowering out of his own successful work in the success and happiness of others whom he had developed and trained.

As we were starting to leave, he took me to the sales room to see some elegant samples of finished work.

"What size does Mrs. Lockridge wear?" he asked. And before we got away, I was handed a gift box of the choicest styles.

"These are for the little lady," he said with a gracious smile. Evidently he could still remember that a present of fine silk hose is a rare delight to feminine fancy.

At his attractive living quarters in the Arcady Apartments, he pointed out with both pride and humor the well-selected vintages of his pantry, remarking, "You see, I still enjoy good spirits." He had also an equally well-selected and well-filled book shelf of the best and strongest books of the day.

This somewhat cursory introduction is intended to depict the subject of our biography as he is today, in his eighty-fourth year.

It is a fitting part of this author's note to explain here that during eight of the most active years of Mr. Thieme's life, 1914 to 1922, I had been closely associated with him—in fact employed by him—in some special phases of his most active interest at that time—the development in the Wayne Knitting Mills of his progressive program of welfare and educational work, and his civic crusade. From 1914 to 1917, I was secretary of the Citizens' League of Indiana, of which he was the leading sponsor, and assisted him with much

of his research, writing, and speaking on civic reform. From 1917 to 1922, I was welfare director and employment manager of the Wayne Knitting Mills. During that time he contributed the endowment for the reorganization of the old and founding of the present Fort Wayne Art School and Museum, of which I was secretary and a member of the board of governors in its early stages.

Although I rejoice in this long and intimate personal acquaintance with Mr. Thieme, it is not my purpose to attempt either a eulogy or a critical personal biography. I propose, rather, to offer a constructive history of the main events of his career in relation to his times.

By reason of the unusual advantages offered because of these intimate past relations and the ready help that can be obtained from Mr. Thieme directly, together with the vast amount of documentary material which is at hand, I hope that I may do some justice in this modest effort to a life that was singularly full of lofty vision, gigantic efforts long continued, heart-breaking disappointments, and substantial and enduring successes. This should be the concrete record of a man and his work—a panoramic presentation of a man and his times.

THEODORE F. THIEME
A MAN AND HIS TIMES

Frederick J. Thieme, Family Group in 1876. (Theo. F. Thieme standing on extreme right.)

Chapter I

EARLY YEARS

There isn't much that happened to me in those days worth recording. But I do remember definitely a few incidents that may be interesting. One of the first incidents to indicate my temper was shown when at the parochial school the teacher, who was a man, called me to the platform to receive punishment for something done that I do not remember. He commanded me to put out my hand and I did so, but when he raised his switch and brought it down again, it missed me because I withdrew the hand. He repeated his command and again the switch flailed the air because my hand went backward. He then told me to remain in the room at recess. I didn't like the way he said it, and so when the recess bell rang, I ducked and managed to get out of the room and straight away ran home, a distance of about one and a half miles. After Mother recovered from her fright, she referred the settlement to Father when he arrived home in the evening.

Such was one of the vivid memories of Theodore F. Thieme, as he recalled his childhood days in an informal talk on his eighty-first birthday, February 7, 1938, at his club in Los Angeles. It was a dinner of some relatives and close friends. He spoke in a humorous vein, and many of the incidents he related were at his own expense.

One memory that stood out above all others was that he was blessed with wonderful parents—both devoutly religious and devoted wholly to the right rearing of their children. They were faithful members of the Lutheran Church throughout life, and they tried earnestly to incline all their children to the steadfast teachings of their faith. The good mother devoted herself wholly to church and children. The good father exhibited the principles of a stalwart Lutheran in his business honesty and industry and

a sturdy citizenship, while bestowing every care upon the welfare of his family. Although a rigid disciplinarian himself, he understood his son, Theodore. He took the troubled lad back to school, where a reconciliation was brought about that had lasting effect upon the impressionable boy. Theodore does not remember that he had any more serious school boy troubles. He was to rely upon this good father again and again, far into his own manhood, and never in vain.

These parents, Frederick John and Clara (Weitzman) Thieme, came to make their home in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1855—two years after they were married in Dresden, Germany, the home of the mother. The father's home was Leipzig. Their first child, Clare (who was usually called Lonnie), was born in Leipzig in 1854. Their first American child, the subject of this biography, Theodore Frederick, was born in Fort Wayne, February 7, 1857. Eight more children were born in Fort Wayne, two of whom died in early childhood. The others came as follows: John Andrew, 1858; Gottlieb—usually called Lipes—1862; Frederick, 1864; Pauline, 1867; Hugo, 1870; Mathilde (Tillie), 1872. Lonnie, who was never married, died at the age of seventy-five. All the other seven, including Theodore, were married between 1890 and 1899, and all reared children.

Besides Theodore, one brother, John Andrew of Fort Wayne, and one sister, Mrs. August (Tillie) Heuer, of Laguna Beach, California, are still living. Professor Hugo Thieme died June 2, 1940, at Ann Arbor, Michigan, shortly after his retirement from the faculty of the University of Michigan, where he had been Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages for many years. The mother died in 1887 and the father in 1888. They are buried in the Lutheran Cemetery in Fort Wayne.

Theodore never forgot a desire that his mother often expressed to him that he, the oldest boy, should always be a help to all the others. In this connection it is pleasing to record a late expression of his sister, Tillie, in a letter

written January 2, 1941, concerning the preparation of this biography. She said in part:

> In looking back on the years, I find it almost impossible to tell all I wish to say about my brother's fine character.
>
> When my father passed away, after having raised and educated a large family, his estate was very modest. My brother Hugo and I were the youngest of this large family and the only two left in the process of education. It became a serious question whether I could continue my present education in a very lovely private school or seek outside employment. However, my brother Theodore immediately assumed the financial responsibility and I continued my five years in school.
>
> His outstanding traits of character have always been his keen sense of duty and compelling instinct for providing.

It should be said here in passing that all of his brothers and sisters have enjoyed many direct benefits from his successes in life.

Theodore was born in a rented house on the northeast corner of Calhoun and Jefferson Streets, from which the family moved shortly to another rented house on Lewis Street. When Theodore was eight years old, a large brick home was purchased in the 800 block on West Berry which was the Thieme home from that time. He remembers that his share in moving to the new home was to pull a little wagon, filled with sundries, the distance of about a mile over the loose board sidewalks. The three youngest children were born in that new home, which still stands at 816 West Berry Street, substantially as it stood when it was the Thieme homestead for more than a generation.

Theodore, or Theo, as he was usually called as a boy and by intimate friends all through life, has always cherished profound veneration for the business worth and integrity of his father. In partnership with a brother, John G. Thieme, Theodore's father conducted, all his days in Fort Wayne, a clothing store at the corner of Columbia and Clinton Streets, in which the street floor was the salesroom, and the upper floors were used for manufacturing

ready-made clothing, on a rather pretentious scale for those days. The father was ambitious to do more manufacturing, and this ambition was planted in the breast of the boy, Theodore, and was to be abundantly realized in his mature years.

One of his most treasured recollections is the tribute he received to the sterling integrity of his father during his own early financial struggles. He had succeeded in 1897 in interesting a wealthy New Yorker in a large block of Wayne Knitting Mill stock. While investigating the credit of the new industry, the prospective purchaser called on his banker for advice. The banker said, "If this Mr. Thieme is the son of Frederick J. Thieme, who was a most loyal and honorable customer of this bank for many years, I will vouch for him."

When the good man passed away, the Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette* in its issue of December 17, 1887, said of him:

> In more than thirty years of upright life in Fort Wayne, Frederick Thieme won a most excellent reputation. His dealings as a business man were characterized by the most scrupulous honesty, and his name was always a synonym for honesty and fair dealings.

Theodore got his first schooling in the parochial schools of the Lutheran Church, always a substantial part of the Fort Wayne school system. During his last years in the lower grades, he attended public school in the old Jefferson building at the corner of Ewing and Jefferson, where the big modern grade school stands today.

His early rearing was that of a boy in a large family of young children whose parents were sturdily industrious and religious and devoted wholly to the spiritual and material welfare of all their children. He fitted naturally into the family and community life of a growing young city. He thinks that there was nothing especially noteworthy about his childhood days. That he lived the life of a normal American boy is well attested by the fact that his memories cling only to incidents that were mildly humorous.

Columbia Street, east from Clinton Street, when it was Fort Wayne's "main drag." Scene in 1889. (Courtesy Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.)

J. G. Thieme & Bro. Clothing Manufacturers, and Retail Store in 1889.

At the party for his eighty-first birthday, already referred to, he related several boyish escapades with a relish that showed how naturally the genuine spirit of real boyhood can outlast even the more serious impressions of the passing years. He said:

There was a two-story brick barn on the rear of our lot; the lower floor was used as a wood-shed and a place to stable the cow and at times the horse, while the second floor was a hay-mow, excepting one end, where a space about six feet wide was partitioned off with a doorway cut through in the center, but without a door. At the time of this story there was about five or six feet of hay, and to reach the partitioned end, which was called a store-room, one had to slide down the hay; on the other hand, when one wanted to get back, it was a scramble to climb over the hay. One day we boys were in the lower part of the barn at play, when we were disturbed by an occasional groaning and movement on the floor above, evidently in the store-room.

Boy-like, we imagined all sorts of things, finally taking fright and leaving the barn to report the matter at the house. However, just then brother Gottlieb, or Lipes as he was called, put in an appearance, and since he was unaware of what we had heard, we persuaded him under some pretext, which I have forgotten, to rush up the steps of the barn to the second floor and back into the store-room. He started out on a run and we all after him, but he had no trouble staying ahead, as we all kept at a safe distance behind. So over the hay he went and slid down into the store-room. We boys got as far as the stairs when suddenly there was a yelling and hollering of "Help! Help!"—but there was no help for poor brother Lipes in that crowd, for we all ran as fast as we could to get out of the neighborhood.

Poor Lipes managed to get out of the hay-mow, and when he came down the stairs, still yelling, it was just one grand slide without watching for the treads. All he could say was "It's a man, a man! a tramp!—and I fell on him and he's after me." We all ran for the house and told the story to Mother and the servant girl, who was a large German country maid, afraid of no man. She said, "I'll fix him!" grabbing an iron poker. Out she went with the gang following, and again while she went bravely up the stairs, we cautiously stayed below. Soon we could hear her threatening and scolding, and it wasn't long until we heard her open the hay-door into the alley and then there was a plump and a grunt as she shoved the tramp out. Brother Lipes was a hero for many days.

More significant, perhaps, than this was the memory of a boyish prank which shows that Theo was really a boy among boys and that the zest for mild mischief must have been strong within him. This is how he remembered it at eighty-one.

Another event that I remember vividly occurred one evening when the "gang," being bent on mischief, stretched a string from a tree in the neighbor's yard across the sidewalk and fastened it to a tree in the parkway. The string was put at a level that would catch the hat of a man walking under it. It was dark; the only illumination was a dim gas light at the corner. Every boy found his hiding place, where he could see and yet have a clear get-away. Finally a man was seen approaching, walking briskly with a cane and wearing a silk high-hat. High silk hats were worn pretty generally in those days by business men. When the man arrived under the string he stopped suddenly, and we could hear a bumpty-bump of the silk hat on the sidewalk.

The man picked up his hat and then with his cane began to feel above to find what caused his hat to leave him so unceremoniously. He evidently discovered the string, and the next thing we heard was "Ihr Gott Verdammten lausebuben!" and we recognized our father's voice. Father never learned to express himself forcibly with cuss words in English, but when "the pot was boiling" he went back to his boyhood days and found good German cuss words. This was one of them. When Father's cane pounded on the fence and threatened to annihilate us, every kid ran for shelter.

I managed to sneak through the back door of the house, and when Father got over his desire to catch us and entered the house, he found me busy studying my lessons. He was full of the subject, but I told him I was positive it was the Irish kids back of us on Main Street who did the job. It was customary for the Irish kids on Main Street to unload their misdeeds on the "Dutch gang" on Berry Street, and we in turn unloaded ours on them.

There were, of course, innumerable other contacts of those early days of far greater import, which had merged with the tide of larger experiences and were forgotten. Theodore was not a wonder child, but his childhood was natural and wholesome, and his inborn human characteristics prevailed throughout a long and varied life.

He loved to swim in the old aqueduct that carried the

Wabash and Erie Canal across the St. Mary's River, where the Nickel Plate Railroad bridge parallels the West Main Street crossing now. He is one of the last survivors of the Old Aqueduct Club, made up of men who as boys went swimming there, and who in later life joined in proudly erecting on the spot a handsome monument which bears their names to the number of about three hundred.

At fourteen, he was sent to Concordia College in Fort Wayne—a high grade preparatory school for the Lutheran ministry. It was his mother's wish that he, as the oldest boy, should become a Lutheran preacher, and he was sent to Concordia for that purpose. But that was not his desire, and as he summed it up concisely: "I lasted just two years in the attempt and then quit." However, he liked Concordia and received much benefit there, especially in character training and systematic habits of study. He enjoyed music and Latin especially. He found Latin quite valuable later in mastering the nomenclature of an apothecary. He has cherished some select Latin phrases and mottoes all through life.

He liked boarding at the College during the week and returning for Saturday night and Sunday with his folks. In his birthday talk, sixty-seven years later, he recalled the following incident of one of those week-ends at home.

On one of those Saturday evenings, I had brought with me my room-mate, and the two of us were entertaining the brothers and neighborhood boys in the living room of our home. We were both showing off with big talk, sandwiching in as many Latin words and phrases as were handy. By way of emphasis, I jumped on the table and sat there with my feet dangling down, something heretofore unheard of in the Thieme family, but it added to my feeling of importance, and I finally lay down on the table. My brother John, two years younger, when he was fed up with our bragging, quietly stepped back of me, gave me a punch, and I went sprawling on the floor, with John bolting out the front door. Fortunately, I was not hurt, excepting my pride, which got an awful jolt. I was up and after him, but after chasing him for a block and telling him all that I was going to do to him—which simply sped him faster—I returned to the house to rejoin the party.

He remembers also that his college mates made him the butt of practical jokes that set him forever against smoking a pipe or chewing tobacco. He related one of them gleefully.

One day while I was still in the junior class at college, after the noon dinner, I was approached by a member of the class above me who said, "Thieme, you're a very bright looking boy, and I have decided to invite you to attend our debating club," and with other talk of this kind we started out. Naturally, I was flattered and swelled to have a senior tell me what I had always known before—that I was a bright boy! We finally arrived back of a large cow barn and found already a bunch of boys engaged, not in debating, but in smoking clay pipes. My friend brought me a clay pipe already filled and explained that it was customary for new members to smoke the pipe of brotherhood. He very solicitously produced a light, and I began to puff, and as the pipe would go out every few minutes, he was always ready to light it again.

I tried staunchly to make good my brightness, but the taste of the pipe was so terrible, and my nose and eyes were watering to such an extent, it was hard work. Very soon I also observed that my stomach wanted to come up and it kept me busy holding it down, but not for long, when everything went round in a circle and I just managed to make the wall of the barn and then let nature take its course. I could hear the boys laughing heartily and naturally I didn't feel nearly as bright as I did on the way to the "debate." After I had recovered with the help of a glass of water, my friend laughingly showed me what the initiation smoke consisted of, by picking up a chunk of dry cow-dung and crushing it into the pipe and on top of that putting a thin layer of smoking tobacco, enough to cure me of ever wanting to learn to be a pipe smoker.

Having determined that the ministry was not his destiny Theodore left Concordia at sixteen. It was necessary for him to choose a calling, as it was his father's fixed policy that every one of his boys must have a trade or profession. He then announced that he wanted to be a musician. To his great joy, his indulgent father told him that in order to become a thorough musician, he must begin in a piano factory and serve an apprenticeship that would take him to New York or Baltimore to the Steinway or Knabe factories.

It is worthy of special emphasis here that although Theodore left the well-loved precincts of old Concordia, following his own resolute wish, he did so with keen regret. He thinks now as he did then, that Concordia College offers excellent all around training and development, as a high class school for boys, whether the boys enter the ministry or not.

But he left it of his own volition, though he actually shed tears as he looked upon it for the last time as a student. He left it very much against the wishes of his parents. His mother was almost heart-broken at being thus compelled to surrender her darling wish that her oldest boy should be a minister of the gospel. The father, too, was deeply disappointed but he seemed to comprehend clearly the restless inner urge that led the ambitious youth into other paths. And he was then, as always, ready to help the boy attain his heart's desire.

It may be noted in passing that the regard which both Theodore and his father held for music was natural to the family of that day—the sixties and seventies of the last century. When he was a growing youth, the music that Theodore heard was, to a great extent, family music. It was the music of the home, made with piano or organ along with simple stringed instruments by members of the family. Frequently they were assisted by musical friends and neighbors, who dropped in of evenings to join the friendly circle. The prized piece of furniture was the parlor organ, or—if the family was quite well to do—a grand piano. Usually, the girls played the organ; the boys played violins, guitars, flutes, etc.; and everybody sang. Thus home-made entertainment was provided with song and dance for young and old—a far call from the modern mechanized entertainment to be had by turning a dial or going to a movie.

Theo was really devoted to music and had already become proficient on the piano through the best of private instruction. When ten years old, his father had bought him a

grand piano. It was a great day when this cherished instrument came into the home. One of his fondest childhood memories is of his boyish pride in playing for his father when he came home that evening. He chose "The Battle of Waterloo," a composition that pleased the good father greatly. One of his chief enjoyments at Concordia College was the playing of piano duets with an accomplished young German musician.

But correspondence with the Steinway and Knabe factories brought only vague promises of possible future openings. He said:

> Meanwhile, we decided to try the Fort Wayne Packard Organ Company, and one day Father and I jumped on the bobtailed mule car, with a driver on the front platform where he could reach the mules with his whip, and drove out to the factory in the south part of the city. We were again encouraged with the word "soon."

None of these prospects materialized "soon" enough. Theodore was not to follow his loved music as a life career. But he played the piano as a pleasurable diversion up to the age of seventy.

Chapter II

APPRENTICE AND COLLEGIAN

While waiting impatiently for the promised opening "soon" in a piano or organ factory, a new and wholly unexpected opportunity came to Theodore. A gentleman of some prominence in Grand Rapids, Michigan, an intimate friend of the Thieme family, took dinner at the home. On learning from the father of his anxiety concerning his eldest son, this gentleman suggested that he might be able to place the boy in a drugstore run by his own son in Grand Rapids.

"Because that," as Mr. Thieme explained on his eighty-first birthday, "involved the romance of travel and a change of environment, I agreed."

It cannot be emphasized unduly that Theo was all but consumed with an inner urge, a restless impulse of spirit that was not clearly defined, but that would not let him rest. He wanted to get out and away. He wanted new horizons and larger openings. He wanted to try his wings. This restlessness of spirit remained with him through life, and as we shall see, it took him into many adventures and, through herculean efforts, to substantial achievements. But his beginnings were very modest.

Soon an offer arrived by mail from the Grand Rapids drugstore to employ him as an apprentice on a three years' contract, at a salary of $75.00 for the first year, $150.00 the second year, and $300.00 the third year, with room and board included. He accepted eagerly.

"You can figure it out," he explained, "that the first year I was to receive $1.50 a week, which didn't bother me be-

cause I knew Father would come across for whatever I needed."

It is easy to see that just as Theodore got his love of adventure and travel from his father, so also he got his hope and courage from his faith in the loyal support of that same good father. It was really an opportunity and he sums it up in this way:

> It proved to be an interesting life and of the greatest importance to my future, because I was taught—in fact, compelled—to work hard with my hands. I washed the windows, scrubbed the floors, "and polished up the handles on the big front doors," as Pinafore says. I washed bottles, ran errands, and did everything that nobody else would do. In those days drugstores did most of the paint and oil business, selling paint, oil, and kerosene oil for lamps. Our store did an exceptionally large business in that line. It was my job to pump these various oils and turpentines from barrels into large iron tanks, from which it could then be drawn off for retail delivery. These tanks held two or three barrels, and I would spend at least two days a week pumping oil. We used a hand pump, and after opening the bung with a bung starter, I would stand over a barrel and pump and pump, up and down, with both hands.
>
> This work gave me an enormous appetite, developed my chest, and was in some measure responsible for the good health I have enjoyed all my life. However, at the end of two years, I decided that learning the drug business as an apprentice was no joke. Enough was enough. What I needed was good training at a college of pharmacy. After making all arrangements for a sudden flight, I packed my few belongings, left a note explaining my departure, and took a night train for Fort Wayne.

He remembers regretfully that he had to leave behind a case of puppy love that he had contracted with a brewer's daughter.

Although his parents were somewhat startled to see him, he was able to convince the ever steadfast father that it was better for him to attend a college of pharmacy than to continue longer in an apprenticeship. Plans were made for him to go to the New York College of Pharmacy. His father took him there shortly on one of the trips to the great city that he was obliged to make three or four times a year to

buy woolen and trimming and all that went into the manufacture of clothing.

At the age of eighteen Theodore was enrolled for a regular two-year course in the leading college of pharmacy in the United States. A very attractive feature about his new life was that it gave him a never-to-be-forgotten sojourn in the metropolis of New York, which he looked upon as a veritable dreamland. However, this did not take him away from wholesome home influences, as he related somewhat humorously on his eighty-first birthday.

During the early part of my college course, Uncle Thieme, father's partner, made a trip to New York—and incidentally to look up his nephew, as he considered himself in some sense the religious guardian of the Thieme family. He was a most devout, all-believing Christian, a stalwart Lutheran. Wishing to entertain him properly, I thought I would make a winning by taking him to a large revival meeting that was on at the Hippodrome. Uncle knew nothing of such religious meetings, but simply thought I was taking him to a Church meeting.

During the shouting, praying and noisy demonstration incident to these revival meetings, Uncle sat there like one dazed, and after about half an hour or so he grabbed me by the arm and said, "Come out of this." We went to his room at the hotel, where he spent the rest of the evening warning me in no uncertain terms of the danger of such wicked associates, whom he described as frivolous mountebanks and "hell-hounds." After leading in prayer once or twice, he made me promise that I would never again enter such a dangerous place. I might add that this was one of the promises I had no difficulty in keeping.

When Father came on his next trip, not wishing to make another such mistake, I invited him to go with me to the opera, believing that music would be better for him than religion, and so it proved to be. Father enjoyed the opera immensely and advised me to go often to such musical treats. Grand Opera could be heard then in America in New York and a few other of the largest cities, only.

It should be said here that he has ever held this uncle in affectionate remembrance as "highly religious, sincere and honest—about as perfect a man as we find. His life centered in his home, his church, and his business."

Theodore enjoyed the frequent visits of his father and

uncle. Besides the good advice he received, there was an occasional dinner in the evening at the hotel, which he characterized as "a great event for my stomach." He usually invited his father to the opera, "naturally at his expense."

As a means of acquiring some practical drugstore experience and also supplementing his regular allowance from home, Theodore did some part time work in a drugstore in Brooklyn across the river, while pursuing his college course. It was during this time that the famous Brooklyn Bridge was built; he watched its progress with keen interest. Of his experience in the Brooklyn Drugstore, he gave a touching account in the birthday speech already referred to.

I secured a position in Brooklyn with very nice people. The practical training received in this way was very valuable in connection with the college work. While in this position, I took a room above the drugstore, as my duties included responding to night calls. Just as I was closing the store one evening rather late, a gentleman brought in a prescription calling for calomel powders for a small child. I had just about finished putting these up when another gentleman walked in with a prescription calling for strong sedative powders for an adult. The two gentlemen seemed to be acquainted, and the first gentleman said he would wait for his friend; so both left together about midnight.

After retiring, I began thinking about the possibility of the two boxes of powders being interchanged by the two gentlemen, and the more I thought about it the more excited I became, realizing the real danger to the child if it should be given the stronger powders. I became so restless that I finally got up and went down into the drugstore, put up another box of the child's powders and started out to find its home and satisfy myself. I had neither the address of the child nor of the doctor, and there were no telephones, no taxis, and no electric lights to assist me in my search. I argued to myself that more than likely there would be someone sitting up with a sick child and that consequently there would be a light in the home.

And so I walked the streets for two hours looking for a light. When I was almost ready to give up, I was rewarded by glimpsing a light in the back part of a house. I walked to the rear and managed to peer through the shade, where I saw an old lady sitting by a baby's crib. I knocked at the door, the lady came out, and, wonder of wonders, it was the right address. Upon questioning I found the child had gone

to sleep and consequently no powder had yet been given it. One look at the box confirmed my fears, for it contained the stronger powders which I had figured out could prove serious. I adroitly exchanged the box for the one in my pocket, bade the old lady goodnight, and from there "walked on air," about the happiest man in Brooklyn! I never heard how the calomel powders served the other patient who needed a sedative, but quite likely they helped him, or at least could do no harm.

This left a profound impression upon his mind as to the serious nature of the responsibilities that a druggist has to carry.

He graduated from the New York College of Pharmacy and still exhibits proudly his well deserved diploma, framed and hanging in his Fort Wayne office at Thieme Gardens, which bears the date of March 21, 1876.

True to a habit that has prevailed with him through life, Theodore took advantage, before he returned from college, of an opportunity that was offered for large entertainment and broad culture—the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876. He was unwilling to come back to Fort Wayne with his diploma without first visiting that famous international exposition. So he attended the fair at Philadelphia with some friends and spent several weeks enjoying the grand and spectacular exhibits from all parts of the civilized world. It was his first world's fair, and it left an ineffaceable impression with him. He resolved then and there to visit every world's fair during his life time, and he has kept that resolution faithfully.

For more than sixty years he has attended every large exposition of international and local character in America and Europe, concluding with the recent expositions of San Francisco and New York. He looks upon these world enterprises as effective promoters of progress and enlightenment in every line. Prompted primarily by commercialism, they serve also to promote progress in science, invention, economics, industry, art and education. He regards as most significant the vast reciprocal features, whereby all the

nations participating are enabled to enjoy mutual advantages not only in trade but also in wide social and cultural advancement. He believes that these huge exhibitions have generally paid both in dollars and in less tangible rewards of a more enduring nature. They offer international courses of observation and study for all who attend them thoughtfully.

Back home again in Fort Wayne in the fall of 1876, Theodore found it necessary to go to work, though he didn't feel much inclination to settle down. His mother and uncle considered it essential to his spiritual welfare that he be in Fort Wayne under proper home and church influence, and his father thought he ought to be earning some money. In consequence, he was persuaded to accept, reluctantly, the position of second prescription clerk in the Meyer Brothers Drug Company. The family had induced Mr. Meyer to write him a flattering letter at the time of his graduation, pointing out especially that he needed in his business a college graduate and a bright, active young man.

He says of this now:

"I bit, and came back, working for Meyer Brothers nearly two years."

But it was only an interim. He still cherished visions that would not let him rest.

Chapter III

WANDERLUST

After about two years of clerking in the drugstore, having reached the age of twenty-one, Theodore resolved to gratify his restless longing for travel by a trip to Europe in the summer of 1878. He succeeded in winning the hearty approval of both parents. His mother's people were living in Dresden and his father's in Leipzig. Neither of the parents had been back since coming to America in 1855. Both of the grandmothers were still living. So father and mother joined heartily in the proposal of their oldest son to make a visit to the homes of their childhood and convey their greetings to dear ones in the Old World whom they had left behind nearly a generation ago.

Theodore had been saving of his meager salary and had paid back his college expenses, but had not much ahead. His father made the necessary advances. The fact was that this broad-minded parent appreciated the restless spirit of his son and sympathized with the wanderlust which had descended from him directly—a restless longing that he had never been able to gratify.

So the young man started on his voyage across the Atlantic like a pilgrim to the promised land. He marked out his course carefully, having no intention of proceeding directly to his destination. Through the British Isles he wandered with a congenial company, finding rare enjoyment in the Emerald Isle, Bonnie Scotland and Old England. He kept an elaborate diary, making entries of descriptive and historical facts as conscientiously as if he were the first to discover and record these well known wonders.

Then across the historic channel he fared on the way to Gay Paree, where he arrived on an early morning boat train and took breakfast in the station restaurant. While struggling with his imperfect French to explain to the waiter how he wanted his eggs done, an intelligent looking man of about his own age, seated at the next table came to his relief and gave all the assistance needed. This chance acquaintance proved to be a real gold find. He was a wide-awake young Britisher by the name of James Riley, employed as the French representative of an English manufacturer of textile machinery. He knew Paris like a book, spoke French fluently, and was most amiable in extending every courtesy to the young American during his stay in the French capital. First, he helped secure good living quarters at his own rooming place in a convenient part of the city not far from the Exposition grounds.

The Paris Exposition of 1878 was then in progress. Of course, it was one of the major attractions for the young man on his first European tour. It was his second international exposition, and again he enjoyed, as he had done two years before at the American Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, a vivid panorama of the world's progress in every field. For three weeks, under the helpful direction of Mr. Riley he observed its every important detail. He thinks there has never been a greater world exposition than that of the cultured French capital and our Centennial Exposition of 1876—if indeed, any have equalled them.

This invaluable friend gave him about all his spare time day and night. Besides the Exposition, they took in all other points of Parisian interest—art galleries, museums, theatres, cafés, dance halls, and the like. They usually took dinner in the Bohemian quarter. It was one continuous round of pleasure and culture for the questing young American. He learned how to use the best of French foods and wines.

Of course, this could not last forever. The end came

rather abruptly. His comfortable apartment had been taken on the understanding with the English landlady that it was being held for her sister and husband, who were expected to arrive with their children from London for a visit at the Exposition almost any time. So, as Theodore recorded, "One morning when I awakened I found a couple of kids lying on the floor at the foot of my bed, and in the next room the family were scattered around, sitting in chairs and lying on the floor. They had arrived during the night. My visit was over."

It is worthy of note in passing that he kept up friendly correspondence with the companionable James Riley for several years but finally lost track of him. After many years, (1918) he noticed the same name in an American Trade Journal, advertising a large concern dealing in textile machinery and importing Egyptian cotton. A letter of inquiry brought the pleasing information that it was his old Parisian friend. The two arranged to meet in Boston and spent a delightful afternoon in a business men's club reviewing those happy days of their early dreams.

On through the continent, Theodore followed the beckoning lure of his wanderlust. Through Switzerland, Austria and southern Germany, he travelled, leisurely taking in all points of major interest. "Those were happy days," he summarizes. The limitations of space make it impossible to record the vivid details that he still remembers well. He was profoundly impressed with the material symbols of antiquity—emblems of history, art and architecture—that abounded in all the old world capitals. The city of Rothenburg, Germany, was especially impressive to him because of the survival of medieval architecture — ancient buildings, towers, and walls still in good condition. He revelled in the rare specimens of art found there as in all the great continental centers. One striking picture he recalls vividly—a huge wall painting depicting the end of all things. Strangely enough, there was a definite division. On the right was a group of women facing an

inviting glow—the road to Heaven; on the left was a multitude of men, facing darkening clouds and smouldering fires—the road to Hell.

There was an interesting personal connection that accounted for his spending several inspiring days in Rothenburg. The bookkeeper in his father's establishment in Fort Wayne, who had come from Rothenburg, had provided Theodore with a letter of introduction to his brothers who operated a large toy factory, making famous Nurnberg toys. They gave him a hearty welcome. As their guest for three or four days, he was shown not only everything of interest in the city, but in the surrounding beautiful country as well.

Finally, he turned his steps toward his main objectives—the cities of Leipzig and Dresden—the goals that had been set for him by his father and mother. His reception there in the home land of his parents surpassed his fondest dreams. The venerable grandmothers took him in their arms and to their hearts. The uncles and aunts were most cordial and hospitable, and the numerous cousins were kind and gracious. All were in good circumstances and living happily. All his relatives in both cities extended themselves in every way with pleasing generosity to make his visit most enjoyable and beneficial. "Those were happy days, indeed," he still repeats again and again. Week after week, he revelled in one continuous round of pleasure.

Two of his cousins were ribbon manufacturers in Dresden. Through them he was introduced into leading clubs and taken to all the best entertainments. He could speak German readily and became accustomed quickly to a high-grade German way of living. Day after day was spent with these gracious kinfolks in Dresden—in their comfortable homes, in art galleries, cafés, and other places of interest. Night after night was enjoyed in the sumptuous clubs and at operas and dances.

Here is a typical Dresden day, as copied from his diary:

Mr. Meyer, a jolly old millionaire, called on me at hotel and we breakfasted together. Later, after a drive through the city park, stopped for beer and lunch at restaurant; then took excursion boat for Pilnitz on Elbe, a pleasure ride of two hours. Beautiful shores, old castles on mountain tops; at Pilnitz is a royal castle. Walked up the hill and around it to where a grand view is obtained of Dresden. This is sächsische Schweitz (Saxony Switzerland). Back to Pilnitz. Had a jolly good time—enjoyed a Plum feast. Walked through Royal Castle garden to restaurant. Then boat back to Dresden. Passed evening in Belvedere Restaurant on Bruhlsche Terrace. Fine concert. Met several friends. Concert was excellent, had early supper here. Then to Nurenberger Hof. Passed evening, beer and late supper.

Dresden, the capital of Saxony, was a leading art and music center of Europe. For generations, perhaps centuries, the kings and early rulers of Saxony had levied heavy tribute for the purpose of making great collections of works of art—sculpture as well as painting. The Sistine Madonna is there. Dresden prided itself on a magnificent new opera house, a rival of the Paris Opera. In fact, these two opera houses claimed the distinction of standing at the head of the world's opera houses for elegance, completeness and adaptation to the production of opera. In order to enable the people to participate freely in the enjoyment of this magnificent place of musical entertainment, the government subsidized liberally and in every way gave encouragement to the production of grand opera, furnishing thereby performances that have hardly been excelled to this day. The young Mr. Thieme naturally took full advantage of this opportunity to join with his friends in regular attendance on opera nights.

The art galleries were his greatest source of enjoyment during those happy days at Dresden. He wandered through them, enjoying and studying the great masterpieces, thereby becoming familiar with great art under the most favorable circumstances. Dresden itself is placed in a picturesque and artistic setting—situated on the Elbe River, doorway to the Switzerland of Saxony with mountain roads leading into Bohemia toward Baden Baden.

He divided his time about equally between Dresden and Leipzig, having about as many relatives in one place as in the other. His associates in Leipzig led him again into the realm of music, but the musical entertainment was for the most part instrumental, while in Dresden it had been operatic and vocal. He had sufficient musical background to enable him to understand and enjoy fully music in all its various forms. One of his Leipzig relatives owned a piano factory, and the whole family was musical. Theodore was taken into the American Musical Students Club. Leipzig was a center of musical education in Europe at the time. A colony of fine young Americans was there, and Theodore enjoyed himself to his heart's content with them and with his gracious relatives. He recalls with pride and pleasure that in later years several of those talented young Americans rose to prominence in the world of music. He remembers vividly, after more than three-score years, how he spent night after night with them—often into the small hours—singing, dancing, eating, and drinking good German beer in moderation. It was the joyous revelry of talented youth in a perfect setting.

Leipzig was the home of an annual International Fair, the greatest continuous fair center of the world, having been in existence over six hundred years. Quaint exhibitors from everywhere, and especially from the Orient, were there. Strange costumes and strange customs were seen. Instrumental music was presented in the famous Gewandt House, considered the first building anywhere designed exclusively for orchestra and other instrumental music, as well as for vocal concerts. A great artist in those days would scarcely venture on a world career until he had enjoyed the distinction of an appearance and approval at the Leipzig concert hall. Leipzig was noted for its publishers and writers of music in all languages.

Here are some typical days in Leipzig, as copied from Theodore's diary, kept up faithfully from day to day.

Tuesday morning—wrote letters till 12, then dined with Wolf at Grunebaum's Restaurant—took a walk, met Shaffer and Muller at 3—strolled through Messe (Fair) until 6. Met Rammer with friends at University Café. Ate supper; afterwards all went to Vanity Theater until 11, then to English Café. Parted at 2.

Saturday, home until 12. After a walk, called on Yost, dined at Uncle's, after dinner to Thomas Kirche, heard Bach Motet—Then called at Rammer's; met boys in Feuer Kugel (Fireball) at 6:30. Supper there, then all to Schutzenhouse. Drank bottle of wine in Grosser Saal, performance of Chinese trapeze and ladies' vaudeville—very good.

Sunday. Arose early. Met Wolf at 8, and to Nicolas Kirche, grand church music, vocal and orchestra. Walked a while—met Rammer at 11, visited Artists' Theater in Bookhouse Bldg.; at 12, rode to Reudewitz—dinner with Coccejus and spent afternoon there. At 4 to Grand Restaurant to see Balloon Ascension—Met some interesting people. At 6, supper with Wolf. At 8 met Mr. Yost at Greenbaum, beered till 11. Then home.

And so the exuberant young American revelled in all his heart's desire with music and good fellowship in Leipzig and with art and good fellowship in Dresden, dividing his time about equally between them. He learned the best in German social life and achieved a good insight into many aspects of art and manners peculiar to European culture. He also got practical education in the correct use of selected foods and in the proper use of wine and beer as he believes nature intended them to be used.

Theodore learned a life lesson in moderation in that agreeable atmosphere. He learned that drinks such as wine and beer that are used to excess in some countries are used only as wholesome beverages by continental Europeans. They are served with food and act as vehicles for stimulating conversation and social intercourse in general. For ages, the people of these countries have met their friends in restaurants, cafés, and amusement places where everything necessary for spending the dinner hour, or for a whole evening, is supplied. There are places for the poor, as well as for the rich, and some for both rich and poor. Whole families are as much at home in such places as individuals

or couples. These cafés and restaurants are conducted on a highly respectable and moral basis. Drunkenness is practically unknown. Rare musical entertainment and vaudeville are furnished in all the larger places. There are no bars. All sit at tables. Hats and coats are taken by the waiter, and perfect decorum is observed.

It was not unusual for the judges of the Supreme Court of Germany to walk in a body to a café for public lunch at a reserved table, where each was served with a large stein of beer along with the food. Once in Dresden, Theodore saw the Crown Prince of Saxony, accompanied by a large body of uniformed officials spend an evening in a beer restaurant, celebrating some important event—drinking, singing and making witty speeches which all enjoyed. There was no excess. He was deeply impressed by this whole round of enjoyable experiences in the public refreshment places, and has never lost the valuable teaching that such moderation imparted to him thus early in life.

Those glorious days of wanderlust extended naturally into weeks and weeks into months. The European tour that had been scheduled for three months was trebled almost before he knew it, but the end was inevitable. He summed it up tersely.

> I became so fond of this life that my three months' vacation was extended to nine months, and it was only when Father sent his last remittance and positive assurance that nothing more would be coming that I returned to America. I tried to get a position as traveling salesman in Germany in order to be able to live there, but failed.

So the young pilgrim prepared ruefully to turn his steps homeward across the Atlantic. He budgeted his final allowance rigidly, figuring the lowest possible cost of the return passage at the cheapest rate on the slowest boat. He was willing to sleep on deck if necessary in order to use his dwindling resources to the last penny in prolonging his delightful stay to the last possible minute.

The return journey was not entirely uneventful. He recites it briefly, as follows:

On the steamer coming back we had an experience running into a school of whales. The ocean ahead of us was black with a moving mass of dark bodies, all spouting. The whales were so interested in whatever they were doing (whether celebrating a birthday or a wedding) that they did not get out of our way, and we cut a whale almost in two and brushed away others. We also had a storm, during which a wave washed over the deck, broke doors and windows of the social cabin on the top deck, and nearly washed me with a few other passengers through the doorway. I was reading a book on the Kneipp Water Cure which was quite a fad in those days. Although everything, including ourselves, was drenched, I found this book after the storm, high and dry where it had blown up on one of the steel girders. The waves seemed to respect the mission of the "water cure."

Arriving in New York, I was completely broke, with my baggage and everything else of value put up with the purser, who had financed me on the assurance that upon my arrival in New York, he would be reimbursed. I was fortunate in the acquaintance of Father's bank in New York and had no trouble getting all the money I wanted.

Thus ended that first glorious gratification of wanderlust at the age of twenty-two. Twelve long and busy years were to pass before he could indulge it again. But it gave him a world vision that was never lost. It left ineffaceable souvenirs of happiness in his heart, together with a restless longing for larger and better things that was one day to be richly realized.

Chapter IV

PHARMACIST

Mr. Thieme summed up the situation confronting him after his golden season of wanderlust, as follows:

> Back in Fort Wayne, that little country town did not look good to me, but when a fellow is broke he must accommodate himself.

Immediately upon his return from Europe he was asked by Charles Woodworth, proprietor of the Aveline House Drugstore, to help out for a few weeks while he took a vacation. It was while he was working there that the opportunity was offered him to purchase the old Nill Drugstore; and he persuaded his father to help him buy it.

Thus Theodore at the age of twenty-three, in 1880, became a druggist—or as he prefers now to term it, a pharmacist—in his home town of Fort Wayne. He was to be the proprietor of an apothecary shop there for the next decade.

Although he does not seem to have entered upon this stage of his career with much enthusiasm, it was the only thing to do; and it proved to be an important interim in his development—the evolution of his destiny, as he looks back upon it now.

He was a successful druggist. Indeed, he was well trained and well qualified for it. He had had practical drugstore training beginning in his sixteenth year and, in addition, had spent two years at the New York College of Pharmacy, from which he had a diploma. There was every reason why he should succeed in this venture. Although he never ceased to cherish dreams of larger realms, he threw himself vigor-

Theo. F. Thieme with clerk at entrance of drug store in 1885.

ously into the conduct of the drug business and made a success of it from the very start.

His first store was located on the west side of Calhoun Street in about the middle of the block between Berry and Wayne Streets on the south side of the alley. The place was badly run down. It took Theodore a week or more to clean up and throw out the rubbish. He did the work himself. He could not afford a clerk, but kept a boy part time to do odd chores and cleaning. His modest beginning in that old store was a good preparation for better business in a larger store.

Yet today as he walks up and down the west side of Calhoun Street past the alley, he often stops to gaze fondly upon those same old brick walls that enclosed his first little drugstore. As he looks down the alley, his memory reverts pleasantly to that far away day some sixty years ago when he used to slip out of the side door of his drugstore along the alley to enjoy a banana luncheon at White's fruit store. Of course, the old fruit store, together with the livery barn adjoining, with their fronts on Berry Street, about where the Fort Wayne National Bank and the Baltes Hotel now are, has long since passed into the limbo of vanished things.

After about two years, he moved to a better place, of which he wrote:

> I rented a much larger store at the next corner, with poor Father going down into his pocket again for a liberal loan to stock the new store.

His new store was well situated—on the southwest corner of Calhoun and Wayne, where there has been a fine drugstore from that day to this.

It is a significant reflection of the convivial disposition that characterized young Mr. Thieme then and remained with him through life, that a gang of congenial spirits made of his drugstore a favorite loafing place. It is also characteristic of his mildly mischievous fun-loving nature that he still recalls with relish some of the pranks of him-

self and his gang. The following is a typical reminiscence of his eighty-first birthday:

There was a prominent young man, one of the drugstore loafers at my place, who was completely in love with himself, and not only that, but informed everybody that he knew he was the handsomest and best dressed young man in town and that all the girls were trying to get him. This led to a little conference one day among the gang, and they decided to give him a little lift. The first step taken was to send Eddie a letter in a lady's handwriting, informing him how much she admired him, and how desperately anxious she was to make his personal acquaintance, etc., etc. If agreeable, she would like to meet him Saturday evening, and said she would drive along Clinton Street in a hack, and sharply when the court house clock struck nine, she would stop at the alley back of the English Lutheran Church and open the cab door for him to jump in for a little drive. Reply to be sent to Eleanor Jones or somebody, care general delivery.

The reply was favorable and Eddie agreed to be there. This letter was written on a Monday, and during the rest of the week Eddie was unbearable in his bragging of another big "mash" among the girls. The next move was to bribe a hackman with a $5.00 bill to carry out his part. And then the most important part was played by a colored lady, the cook in one of the large saloons, a 250 pounder whose gay laughter sounded like church chimes, a thoroughly good natured and competent person to handle the job, namely to receive Eddie as he jumped into the hack, smother him with kisses, and hold him tight while the hack drove to the next corner and then let him out.

On that Saturday night, the stage was set, with the gang hiding behind trees and fence-posts and in recesses of the church. By nine o'clock Eddie was pacing up and down Clinton Street. Of course, in those days the only street lighting consisted of dim gas lamps at the street corners. As the court house clock struck nine, the old hack rolled up along side of the alley, the door opened, and Eddie jumped in; then the fireworks started. The bell-like laughter of Aunt Mandy and the cussing and swearing of Eddie was certainly sensational, and the boys everywhere ducked out of their corners and followed the hack. But instead of going to the second corner, the hack barely made a half block, when Eddie tumbled out, minus his hat and coat, and we saw no more of him for about two or three weeks. A peace rally in Home Billiard Hall healed his battered pride. The lady was somewhat bruised and battered, but otherwise there was no damage. After that we heard no more about Eddie's conquests.

As for his business capacity as demonstrated during the decade of his twenties, it suffices to say that Theodore was a tiptop druggist. He built up a very substantial business and made it pay. After three years of going it alone, he sold a half interest in the business to Otto Gross, who had just married his cousin, Clara Thieme. The new partnership was announced in the *Journal* as follows:

> Mr. Theodore F. Thieme, the widely known druggist, has associated in partnership with Mr. Otto Gross, son of Rev. C. Gross, pastor of the Emanuel Lutheran Church. The firm will be known as Thieme and Gross. The new partner is a popular gentleman and a skillful prescriptionist, and will be remembered as at one time a prescriptionist at Meyer Bros. & Co. He is a graduate of the New York College of Pharmacy.

It was a good partnership and resulted in an intimate and lifelong friendship. Otto Gross had a long and creditable career in Fort Wayne as a druggist and later physician. He was for many years the personal and family doctor of Mr. Thieme and was one of the last regular industrial physicians of the Wayne Knitting Mills under Mr. Thieme's management.

Thieme and Gross maintained a high-grade pharmacy, featuring every line of regular drug dispensing, along with some outstanding specialties. They did extensive and original advertising both by wide distribution of circulars and by liberal patronage of the public press. Clippings preserved by Mr. Thieme in a scrap-book reveal their progressive policies and reflect something of the nature of the best apothecary service of that day.

Thieme's Mead was a popular beverage. Mr. Thieme still enjoys an occasional soda or phosphate at the modern fountain on the corner of Wayne and Calhoun Streets where he used to serve his own refreshing and mildly exhilarating Mead to happy customers.

The trade was augmented substantially by the maintenance of a barber's supply house, for which an annex was added to the drugstore. Much unique advertisement was

given this department, including an elaborately illustrated booklet of twenty large size pages.

Mr. Thieme kept living quarters most of the time in the second story over the drugstore with a piano as companion. His good fellowship tendencies and musical inclinations were freely indulged. There was a music store in the same block to which he was given a key by the friendly proprietor, so that he could divert himself at odd hours with choice instruments. He and August Bruder, a rising young jeweler, often rendered sprightly duets with flute and piano before admiring friends. Theodore remembers exuberantly that for a young man to play the piano in that day was a sure road to popularity with the girls, who would gather admiringly around him.

Perhaps his most active social connection of those years was the Fort Wayne Bicycle Club, of which he was one of the founders and a very enthusiastic member and officer throughout its more or less glamorous career of nearly seven years—from April 1884 to September 1890.

The drugstore of Thieme and Gross on the southwest corner of Wayne and Calhoun was a good gathering place. Running the full length of the half block on Wayne Street, it was a convenient place for bicyclists to stop. Theo was a good wheelman himself, and he welcomed this jovial group at his drugstore. Incidentally, it was pretty good business as well. The thirsty wheelmen imbibed freely of Thieme's Mead and bought cigars.

The prominent part that the Fort Wayne Bicycle Club played in novel forms of public social activities is an interesting reflection of the life of that day more than fifty years ago in the thriving little metropolis of some 40,000 people. The club maintained downtown headquarters. It gave frequent smokers, receptions and dances and threw annual banquets and promenade concerts. These were glittering public functions and they were attended by the best people. Looking back now upon those festive days, Theodore says, "We thought we were some pumpkins."

The following excerpts from the front page report in the Fort Wayne *Sentinel* of April 10, 1888, of the fourth annual banquet of the club is characteristic:

The Fort Wayne Bicycle Club is an organization of which the city can boast with pride as it is the largest in the state, with elegant meeting parlors and a membership embracing some of the brightest and first young men in the city.

The fourth annual banquet of the club, at the Wayne Hotel last night surpassed in elegance, brilliancy and gayety, all former occasions.

The epicurean spread was followed by an intellectual treat in the form of toasts, introduced by a brilliant toastmaster, Carl P. Swain. Responses were made on the following topics:

"The Fort Wayne Bicycle Club"—C. J. McLain.
"The City of Fort Wayne"—A. J. Moynihan.
"The Wheelman"—C. W. Edgerton.
"The Road Hog"—P. C. Darrow.
"Our Rights on the Road"—Chas. W. Kuhne.
"The Age of Wheels"—August Detzer.
"The Small Boy—An Unnecessary Evil"—Theo. F. Thieme.
"A Bicycle Ballad"—LeRoy Harzler.

The smokers were almost as elaborate as the banquets. Of one of their annual Thanksgiving smokers, the *Sentinel* made the following report, in part:

On Wednesday evening last, Thanksgiving eve, was held at the club parlors of the Fort Wayne Bicycle Club, what was unquestionably the largest attended and most enjoyable stag reception ever given in this city. The club's reputation as royal entertainers is one long established and well sustained. That their efforts in behalf of their friends are fully appreciated is evidenced by the unusual attendance of eighty-seven guests, which breaks all former records. Nothing in the way of entertainment had been overlooked or incompletely done. The card tables were constantly filled with cribbage, whist and pedro players. A fine program of music was furnished. Messrs. Thieme and Bruder rendered some of their choice selections for piano and flute so delightfully as to call forth the usual number of encores, with which they are invariably greeted.

Perhaps, the climax of the club's activities was realized in the elaborate parades, promenades, and concerts sponsored by it. The *Sentinel* in a lively article headed "Fun On Wheels," reported one of these carnival parades in part as follows:

> The Fort Wayne wheelmen covered themselves with glory last evening. They promised the people of our city a novel, picturesque parade and right well did they redeem the promise. Fifteen thousand people viewed the parade and it was the frequent expression of people along the line of march that it eclipsed anything ever seen in carrying many and variegated colored lanterns, torches and transparencies. Many of the wheelmen went to considerable expense and infinite pains to make as fine a turnout as possible. Notable among these was Captain Louis Ohnhouse, whose machine was entirely enclosed in a framework representing the outlines of the Scotch racing yacht, "The Thistle," from which no less than forty-two lanterns were swung. None but an experienced skipper could have navigated a craft like this, but Captain Ohnhouse went through and reached port in safety.
>
> C. W. Edgerton led the procession with a beautifully decorated tricycle.
>
> Ed. Noll, like Captain Ohnhouse, had a finely decorated yacht.
>
> John Hanna, T. F. Thieme, J. S. Evens, Carl P. Swain, Sam Hanna, Will Buckles, Fred Thieme and many others appeared with elaborately decorated mounts which it would take too much time to describe separately. Let it suffice to say that no more beautiful, novel or picturesque procession ever passed through our streets.

Mr. Thieme recalls humorously now an embarrassing incident of that parade. He was particularly anxious to make an impressive showing before a well lighted home on East Berry, where he knew some bright eyes would be watching for him in the glittering parade. But alas, as ill luck would have it, his high front wheel struck a hole in the rough street right in front of that very house, and before he had made full recovery from that, his little rear wheel struck a rock, with the result that he was spilled right there before those watching eyes. Those quaint old Columbia bicycles with the big and little wheels were susceptible to headers. But the young speedsters made a gallant showing, hand-

Fort Wayne Bicycle Club Picnic, about 1886.

The style of the elegant eighties. Messrs. Theo. F. Thieme (center), H. T. Siemon (left), and E. C. Thrall, in 1888.

somely uniformed with neatly belted jackets, nifty knickerbockers, and jaunty caps.

With four other energetic members of the club, Theodore made a century bicycle run — 500 miles in 5 days — into Ohio in June, 1885. It was reported in the Dayton *Journal* and copied in the Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette,* June 23, 1885.

Five members of the Fort Wayne Bicycle Club arrived in the city Thursday noon, and made the run from Lima to Dayton in seven hours, an average of ten miles an hour. The party left yesterday at 8:15 A.M., for Piqua, and telephoned their arrival in that city at 10:30 A.M., making the twenty-seven miles in two hours and a quarter, an average of twelve miles an hour. During their stay in this city they were the guests of the Phillips House, and were registered as follows: C. W. Edgerton, F. S. Lightfoot, H. A. Vogel, T. F. Thieme and S. D. Bond. The club has returned home.

He recalls that upon this trip he saw for the first time a crude experiment in home electric lighting and telephoning.

In the spring of 1888, with a boon companion, Herman Siemon, Theodore had occasion to draw upon his cycling prowess, as reported in the *Sentinel* April 1, 1888.

Theodore Thieme and Herman Siemon have returned from their two months' outing in the far west. While in California they did considerable touring on bicycles rented in San Francisco. Mr. Thieme had some novel experiences in cycling, including some thrilling coasts of one and two miles "up hill" and an eighteen mile spin on the Pacific ocean beach.

He had enjoyed a rented bicycle in a similar adventure with a boon companion at the New Orleans Exposition three years before, where they toured the city and country on the famed shell roads.

The promenade concerts were the most distinctive of all the club's activities. From the very first, they were successful and popular, as declared by the following press report:

The Bicycle Club's first promenade concert took place last evening at the Princess rink. Owing to the extremely severe weather, the

club had grave fears for the success of their first entertainment, but by 9 o'clock all doubts were swept away and the series of entertainments was an assured success. About 125 couples of Fort Wayne's best people braved the bitter cold night and attended. The musical program, consisting of six concert selections and six dances, alternated, was artistically rendered by the Fort Wayne city band, assisted by W. H. Hiestand, the famous concert soloist.

It seems that this masculine club gradually became more and more social-minded, as intimated in the following report of the fifth annual banquet.

Heretofore the club has been an exclusive affair and a sort of haven for bachelors, but since the introduction of the tandem, Perry DeHaven has introduced a resolution expelling from membership anyone who cannot boast of a sweetheart.

Like all good things of all times, this virile organization came to an end. Perhaps the increase in the age and the business responsibilities of the members had something to do with it. At any rate, it succumbed in due course.

Mr. Thieme acted as toastmaster at the last banquet, April 9, 1890. As secretary-treasurer, he had charge of the club's property and paraphernalia and had to assume much of the responsibility attending the fall of the auctioneer's hammer. He was at that time planning an important change in his own affairs that would take him far from those light-hearted associations of the Fort Wayne Bicycle Club, as well as from his life as a pharmacist.

He was enjoying himself heartily during that interim of his life and was happy in the prosecution of his pharmaceutical business. Writing of this some years ago, shortly after his final retirement from active business, he said:

The drug business was highly fascinating and I loved it, especially the prescription department and the manufacturing of preparations; but the hours were long. Doors were open every day in the year, Sundays and holidays included, and after a year of hard work there was little profit to show for it. The details of running a drugstore exceed those of any other business I know. Memorizing the thousands of items and the names of chemicals, herbs, barks, pills, tinctures and

extracts, not to mention patent and proprietary medicines, is an accomplishment which must be learned in early years.

He has never ceased to emphasize the importance of that kind of training—training in exactness covering numberless details—training in assuming responsibility for innumerable little things. He filled all the prescriptions for several of the best doctors in Fort Wayne. In those days, the doctors wrote many prescriptions that had to be skillfully compounded. Pills, capsules, and suppositories were used extensively, and they had to be made in the drugstore. A pharmacist had to understand infusions, tinctures, decoctions, mixtures, and powders of wide variety. He had to be familiar with ingredients, qualities, and reactions of many kinds. When any one of a thousand things was called for, he had to know it and find it. He had to know how to use it—how much and at what price.

Mr. Thieme believes to this day that every bit of this training was invaluable to his later life. It made possible the development of certain specific functions of the mind to an extraordinary degree. It gave him quickness of grasp and firmness of retention in the midst of the innumerable and perplexing problems which were to confront him later.

He enjoyed such work throughout his lively twenties, and he made a prime success of the drug business. But all the while he was restless and filled with longing for larger fields. He wanted to be somebody and to have more money; he wanted to know the taste of a life that could only be found through the earning of much greater wealth than could possibly be realized in the drug business, however successful. His feet itched for travel, and his heart hungered for art and music. He wanted to apply his mind and turn his hands to big productive work whereby his desires could be realized. He leaned toward manufacturing, as his father had always done. The father had not been able to gratify this ambition, except in a modest way in the form of clothing manufacturing. The ambitious son dreamed of becoming a big manufacturer.

Strangely enough, his opportunity was to come through a current political development. Though never active in politics, he always took an interest in campaigns and kept himself well informed on political issues. Thus, he became a follower of William McKinley and a warm supporter of the McKinley Protective Tariff Law, enacted by Congress in 1889. That law had for its chief aim the encouragement of new manufactories by means of a tariff high enough to equalize the difference in cost of labor and materials between the United States and foreign countries. Writing of this long afterward, Thieme said:

To me, this new tariff law was an invitation to Americans to take advantage of its protective features, to help build up American manufactures, and my mind was soon made up to be one of these new manufacturers. In textiles, metals, heavy machinery, dyes, lithography, and a hundred other industries, Europe was at that time supreme — especially England and Germany. Attempts to make many of these articles in the past had failed because wages and costs of manufacturing were from three to four times higher over here than there. And now the new Tariff Law would examine into costs of labor and material over there and here, and regulate the difference by a higher tariff. . . .

Because of my strong position as a protectionist, my drugstore became the headquarters for Republican "McKinley-ites," and many a discussion there became so noisy as to interefere with business. Sometimes I would order the gang out on the Wayne Street curb to continue until a Democratic policeman would come along and give the patriots a lift by ordering them to "move on." I was sold on the idea of a protective tariff, and for a few months tried to adopt some plan of action. Eventually I came to the conclusion that the idea was a bold and a big one, and so would demand bold operation.

Thus, he sold his half interest in the drugstore March 31, 1890, to a Mr. J. B. Pellens. Thieme and Gross became Gross and Pellens. He summed it up in this way:

I had taken nobody into my confidence, and so there was nobody with whom to discuss the subject. Therefore, an announcement that I had sold the drugstore came as a surprise to my many friends and customers, who could not understand why I should dispense with this

successful business. Had it become known that it was my intention to go abroad to find and bring over some manufacturing business, immediately I would have been classified as another one of a large variety of "Nuts."

My determination, backed up by action, simply demonstrated that youth is optimistic and takes chances. Considering my complete lack of manufacturing experience and corporation life, my limited capital, and my "going it alone," I have often marveled at my optimism, nerve, and resourcefulness in attempting such an undertaking.

My arguments in favor of the proposition were:

1. The Protective Tariff Policy was sound and opportune and had the active support of the United States Government.
2. I was entering the field at the very beginning, before the rush had started.
3. My age, thirty-three years, without family, was ideal.
4. I had managed my own retail store for ten years, with success; I was a hard worker; I was practical; I had traveled much. Nothing seemed impossible.

He was heart-whole and fancy-free, having no personal or family responsibilities to prevent him from following his newly formed purpose. His parents had both passed away—the mother in 1887 and the father in 1888. After settling all financial obligations, he had about $20,000 left—the savings of a decade. And so with a light heart and lofty resolution, he turned toward the realm of his dreams.

Chapter V

SEEKING NEW FIELDS

Nothing in the long and varied career of Theodore Thieme was more truly characteristic of him than that at the age of thirty-three, he burned the bridges behind him and started out to find new horizons. His vision was not limited to the vast riches of opportunity in the new world. His vision embraced the old world on the other side of the Atlantic. He was resolved to find there a "Golden Fleece" that would become more precious by being transplanted to the new world.

Though it resembled in some aspects an end-of-the-rainbow quest, yet he had really a fairly definite objective, and he skirted the horizon in search for it. He followed first the alluring trail of his desire like a pilgrim with itching feet. His friends, even his own immediate family, thought he was on a joy quest. In fact, he was accompanied by Mr. C. W. Edgerton, a congenial friend, who was purely upon pleasure bent and who had no idea that Theodore was actually pursuing a serious purpose.

First, he indulged his somewhat repressed spirit of wanderlust to his heart's content. His busy years as a diligent apothecary had kept him close to Fort Wayne too long. At last, he could spread his wings. Across the Atlantic he fared with Mr. Edgerton on practically the same wonder route that he had followed in his youthful wanderlust twelve years before—the Emerald Isle, Bonnie Scotland, Old England, across the channel to continental Europe—France, Italy, and Germany. From Paris he wrote a long letter, October 28, 1890, to the Fort Wayne *Sentinel*, in which he

made some lively observations concerning the Ould Sod. His communication drew lively answering sparks in an open letter by one, a patriotic Irishman, Patrick Ryan.

Of course, with his great purpose weighing ever more heavily upon his mind, this joy pilgrimage could not last forever. But he prolonged it as far as possible and made the most of it while it lasted. Even in the midst of all-absorbing pleasures, however, he began preparing for the venture ahead, which he explained as follows:

> In order to save time, I decided to begin my business investigation by inserting a few advertisements in the leading daily newspapers of each city of importance, announcing that an American gentleman was interested in introducing in his country the manufacture of some article benefited by the new McKinley Tariff law, and solicited correspondence. No immediate attention was to be given replies, save acknowledgement, until we arrived in Berlin, where the sightseeing part of the trip would terminate and my friend would return home, while I would remain and devote all my time to the work at hand. When Berlin was reached some four months after landing in England, my mail had taken on larger proportions than I had expected; and I was assured that plenty of opportunities existed for me to grasp, the main consideration being the selection of something worthwhile.

Berlin was the end of the pleasure jaunt. There his friend Edgerton left him to return to America with best wishes for the success of his great quest. There, the adventuring Theodore took a thoughtful canvass of the situation at hand and laid constructive plans for immediate prospecting. He had looked forward to Germany all the time as the most likely country for opportunities to realize his manufacturing vision and hopes. At that time, Germany was leading all Europe in the variety and extent of its manufacturing enterprises.

It is indicative of the range of his interests that, out of his extensive propositions by mail, he first took sixty days options for the exclusive manufacture and sale of two patented articles. One of these was a musical instrument and the other, a rubber cloth. That musical invention later

proved a great success in America. He has never learned what became of the rubber cloth.

It was natural that before taking any final steps, he visited Leipzig and Dresden, where he spent the Christmas holidays with relatives and friends. He introduced his serious purpose to them as a preliminary move to enlist their assistance in his quest. He had spent golden hours for nearly a year at these places, twelve years before, when his thoughts were bent wholly upon pleasure and entertainment. Now his mind was deeply charged with a business mission.

His best contacts at both of these friendly centers proved to be the American Consulates. These contacts made him feel prouder than ever before that he was an American. He wrote of this:

In Leipzig, I called early at the American Consulate and received the customary glad hand, especially so, as the consul was Professor Henry W. Diederich, a Fort Wayne citizen. Although I had no personal acquaintance with him, both Mr. and Mrs. Diederich were friends of our family and had visited at our home. I received a hearty welcome and an invitation to dinner that evening at Mr. Diederich's pleasant apartments, where I met Mrs. Diederich and his family.

After exploiting the news and gossip of the home town, Fort Wayne, we drifted on to the subject of my trip to Europe, in which Mr. Diederich took a keen interest, and it was arranged that I meet his chief assistant the next morning, a man of long experience in the consulate and the business situation of Germany pertaining to my mission. We met accordingly, and after listening to a story of my activities to date, he advised me to visit Chemnitz at once, the chief manufacturing city of Germany, and not to consider anything in the meantime. Mr. Diederich kindly gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Henry F. Merritt, our U. S. Consul there, and the next day I made the short two-hour trip to Chemnitz, where I arrived before noon and presented myself, with my letter of introduction, at the American Consulate.

As usual, I first met the efficient secretary of the Consulate. Answering his inquiries as to my mission in a manner which satisfied him as to my qualifications to meet Herr Consul, I was promptly permitted to do so. I soon found myself in the Consul's private office,

where over some American whiskey high-balls I unfolded the ambitious plans which had brought me to Europe. Mr. Merritt was a six-footer of over two-hundred pounds, blond, whiskered, jovial and right in his prime—a high liver and a hard worker.

After questioning and listening some time, he arose, took my hand and said, "Mr. Thieme, let me congratulate you on having luckily come to the very place in Europe where an opportunity such as you want is waiting for the first man to take it. We have in this city and vicinity the full-fashioned hosiery manufacturing business, selling the larger part of its output to the United States, and what that amounts to I know, because all exportations go through this office."

Instead of returning to Leipzig that evening as previously intended, I remained several days, and arranged for a meeting with Messrs. Merritt and Diederich to discuss some of the many phases and complications involved.

The questing pilgrim felt hopeful that he had found what he was looking for. The full-fashioned hosiery business looked like the Golden Fleece that he was seeking. But he was to learn that there are many intricacies in foreign relations, involving business as well as politics. This is what he found, as he himself expressed it:

The McKinley Tariff Bill had received as much publicity in Europe as it had in America, but the two countries had quite different interests therein. The people of the United States were being solicited by our government to bring European industries to the United States, while European manufacturers and the Chambers of Commerce were on the alert with warnings against this invasion of their exclusive business privileges. U. S. consuls were admonished to keep hands off, factories were guarded closely against visitors and spies, strangers at hotels were watched, and everything possible was done to prevent the confiscation of trade and manufacturing secrets which could be taken to the United States and used there for the manufacture of goods then being bought by us in Europe.

He grasped quickly the far-reaching delicacy of the situation. Those stalwart American consuls were in hearty sympathy with his purpose and they encouraged him without reservation in his hope that he had found the right thing. They wanted to see the full-fashioned hosiery industry transplanted to their native land. But they were on

the spot! They could not exceed their authority, and they would not violate the well established traditions of foreign diplomacy. So he revised his plan of action.

Before proceeding, another meeting was arranged in Leipzig, attended by Messrs. Diederich and Merritt, the latter coming up from Chemnitz for that purpose. After dinner in the evening, at the Opera House Restaurant, we adjourned to a private room and over sundry steins of Pilsner Beer, the customary German method of holding conferences, we discussed the contemplated hosiery enterprise and the manner in which the two consuls could assist, having in mind the obligations and delicacy of their positions as American representatives in a foreign land. The great possibilities of this industry for the United States seemed so assured and so alluring to the consuls, that we gave much thought to a plan for the organization of a company which would include German capital and the launching of the industry on a large scale. My limited experience and capital, however, could not go quite so fast, and nothing came of it. But our meeting cleared the atmosphere considerably and was of great value to me in developing further steps.

So the upshot of it all was that it was up to Theodore. He would have to go it alone with the cordial wishes of the consul. It was then and there that he called into action prominently for the first time the tremendous initiative and persistence that characterized him signally during all the remainder of his life. He resolved to take full-fashioned hosiery manufacturing to America, at whatever cost of effort and trouble. He would seek no further. The Golden Fleece was in Chemnitz. That was the land of Colchis. It was to be the sole base of his operations until his mission was accomplished. This is the way he proceeded:

First of all I disappeared for a few days, and returning to Chemnitz stayed away from the consulate offices to stop gossip. My plans were to make a study and investigation of the industry before arriving at a final decision. I started by engaging an agent who was acquainted with local business, and through luck, found the right man at once, a man familiar with hosiery manufacturing, finishing, and selling. Through his advice, I shed everything American, my name, country, etc., and appeared thereafter as Herr Gross from Poland. He then

took me into a factory which built knitting machines, introducing me as a prospective buyer of machinery.

An office was opened in a hotel room, well stocked with cigars and wines, which room served our purpose well in receiving and entertaining such people, including working people and others who might become interested. Builders of heavy machinery for the manufacture of the various classes of textiles and other products played a most important part in helping to spread manufacturing industries to other countries. While they naturally preferred orders from their own country, yet they are always ready to accept more orders, no matter where from. Builders of hosiery machinery, especially at that time, needed orders, as European hosiery manufacturers were afraid to add more equipment to their plants, in view of threatening competition from overseas. I soon learned the significance of this situation and worked along those lines, so that in a few months I had accomplished practically all I could make use of or needed, before organizing a company and raising the necessary capital.

A great deal of home knitting was done in villages around Chemnitz, where they practiced house industry, by which the stockings were knit on small machines set up in the homes; the stockings were then delivered once a week to a finisher-jobber in the city, where they would be dyed and dressed up in cartons for the market. We made a number of trips through these villages getting acquainted, and before long my office had daily visitors negotiating for the opportunity of going to America. The best men were selected for positions as foremen, knitters and finishers. Estimates for a complete set-up of a plant of different sizes were made, and by spring, I was ready for the next move, which was to go home and organize a company.

And now with the exuberant Theodore on his way back across the Atlantic, it is timely to take a look at the Golden Fleece he had found. The story of the invention and development of full-fashioned hosiery and its final establishment in America contains almost as much romance and adventure as the famous Greek myth of the Argonauts and the heroic Jason. The completed story is a fabric, in the making of which, to use a figure from weaving, time's shuttle has plied over the warp and woof of international jealousy, royal vanity and industrial struggle, with inter-

lacing threads of lofty vision, great ingenuity, and heroic persistence.

The invention of knitting in its simplest form was a revolutionary discovery of the fifteenth century A. D. There is a long stretch of time and history, in fact, several thousand years, between the beginning of weaving and the beginning of knitting. Weaving consists simply of interlacing a transverse thread, the woof, in and out of longitudinal threads, the warp. Although it is an ingenious process, there is not much mystery connected with it; consequently, weaving has been known and practiced almost since the beginning of civilization. There is evidence that it was found in Egypt as early as 5000 and possibly 6000 B. C.

Knitting, however, is a far more intricate process. It involves the seemingly impossible task of making a complete fabric from a single thread. This mystery was finally solved by constructing the thread into a row of loops into which another row of loops is entwined, each row joining a succeeding row until a complete fabric is formed. This interlacing of loops holds the secret of the much desired elasticity, which makes a knitted fabric superior to a woven fabric as a suitable covering for human feet and legs. The inviting exhibits of beautiful hosiery now so universally enjoyed—not alone in the wearing—are taken for granted. Surely a momentary contemplation of the struggle by which they came into their present use should add to the absorbing interest which we have in them.

The progressive stages involved in the story range from weaving to knitting, hand knitting to machine knitting, flat fabrics to tubular fabrics and shapeless cut seams to artistic full-fashioned seams. It involves a series of international stretches by which this industry in its successive stages progressed from one European country to another. And finally, we have the main stretch in which we are interested now—the bringing of the manufacture of full-fashioned hosiery from Europe to America by our Fort Wayne Jason, Theodore F. Thieme, just fifty years ago. It is hard to

realize that within very recent times, in fact, within the busy constructive period of the life of one man, the full-fashioned hosiery industry in the United States has grown to its present enormous proportions. It is almost incredible that as late as 1900, only about one pair of Full Fashioned stockings was sold, on an average, annually in the United States for every 2000 inhabitants.

Knitting probably had its origin in the British Isles; the words knitting, hose and stocking — "cnyttan," "hosa," "stoka"—are of Anglo-Saxon derivation. Hand-knit stockings came to be known in England about the time Columbus discovered America. Henry VIII was the first monarch to wear silk hose, near the end of his reign (1558). Henry's imperious daughter, Elizabeth, in the third year of her reign (1561) tried silk hose and liked them so well that she would no longer wear bunglesome cloth stockings. It mattered little to her that a painstaking knitter had to toil about two months to produce a single pair; and we may well doubt if the spirited Virgin Queen would have allowed modesty, or prudery, to overcome her feminine vanity as did the Spanish Queen, whose minister returned a trader's gift of rare hand-knitted silk hose with the indignant rebuke: "The Queen of Spain has no legs."

The minister was right. Legs were then the prerogative of the male sex and fine long hose were primarily for them. What a change with the shortening of skirts and the lengthening of trousers! O Tempora, O Mores!

In 1563, the Trade of Hosiery was established in England by Act of Parliament. But silk stockings continued for a long time to be very rare and expensive. It is to be remembered that they were hand-knitted up to the 17th century. When James I succeeded Elizabeth in 1603, he borrowed a pair from the Earl of Mar in which to receive the French Ambassadors.

In 1589, during the reign of Elizabeth, the first knitting machine was invented by a clergyman, Reverend William Lee of Nottingham, England. He was a very extraordinary

man, Master of Arts of St. John's College, Cambridge. His machine was complicated and delicate, containing some 2000 parts. Lee asked Elizabeth for a patent, which she refused because it would create a monopoly that would deprive thousands of hand knitters of their humble earnings. It was a royal exercise of hard-hearted authority on behalf of what was thought to be industrial democracy. In fact, some Nottingham hand knitters attempted to demolish Lee's machine in 1590. The coy monarch intimated that she would grant a patent for a machine that would knit silk. This first machine knit only coarse wool. After nine years of diligent experiment, the inventor presented the Queen in 1598 with a pair of machine knit silk hose. Good Queen Bess took the stockings and liked them but refused to grant a patent to the inventor.

The crude machine invented by Lee, was really the direct ancestor of the high-powered, automatically controlled knitting machine of today. His fine-gauge silk stocking machine knit twenty loops to the inch, comparing favorably with the twenty-eight loops, which fine stockings averaged in 1890. Its speed was soon increased from ten times as fast as hand knitting to fifteen times as fast.

We can summarize the slow but substantial progress of machine knitting. Lee's machine knit a flat fabric of whatever length desired but of uniform width. It had to be cut to fit the leg. The raw edges produced an unsightly seam. It took over 200 years to develop the tubular machine that knit round cylindrical seamless hose. A Belgian inventor put the finishing touches on that in 1845 and seamless hosiery became popular.

Gradually along in the middle of the nineteenth century, the full-fashioned adaptation was invented and applied, bringing the long and gracefully tapering stockings, fitting naturally the shape of the leg. The leg is knitted flat, narrowed, and shaped on the machine. The foot, knitted by a different machine, is attached, and the selvages from the

top to the toe are then sewed together in a seam. The result is the lovely full-fashioned stocking.

England held a hosiery monopoly for generations. But the knitting industry crossed the channel in an orgy of smuggling. Troyes, France and Chemnitz, Germany became great centers of the hosiery industry. Chemnitz came finally to be known as the principal home of full-fashioned knitting.

In the meantime, young America got into knitting slowly. Of course, hand-knitting came with the first colonists in the 17th century. It is claimed without positive authority that the first machine was smuggled over in 1723. Ipswich, Massachusetts, and Germantown, Pennsylvania, are rival claimants of this first Lee machine in America. Both became early knitting centers, along with Newburyport, Massachusetts. They smuggled some of their machines from England and some from Germany, though both of those countries guarded against exportation of knitting machines very jealously.

Of course, all this was simply flat knitting that had to be cut to fit the leg. There was no establishment of full-fashioned knitting as an industry in America, until Theodore F. Thieme brought it at the beginning of the Gay Nineties.

The brief recital, earlier in this chapter, of the originality and initiative of Mr. Thieme in his crusade not only to export full-fashioned hosiery knitting machines to America, but actually to establish the full-fashioned hosiery industry in America, is only a mild and cursory summary of what he really did: but it establishes a fitting continuity in the age-old drama of the history of hosiery. He was to carry that drama to a grand American finale. He had carried on month after month against overwhelming odds in his efforts to get machines and knitters to go with him to the new world. But his ingenuity, supported by his unfaltering resolution, had overcome all obstacles, the most stubborn of which was the determination of the full-fashioned hosiery

manufacturers of Chemnitz that no German workmen should be permitted to help take the full-fashioned business to America.

The following letter to his brother Gottlieb (Lipes) was written near the end of the long struggle. It expresses something of the difficulties encountered and manifests his resolution in overcoming them:

Chemnitz, June 4, 1891

Dear Lipes:

You have no doubt received my letter and cable, and I hope have understood the meaning of it. Things are shaping themselves in such a manner that we must adopt a different course in order to carry out our plans, and I tell you there is blood on the face of the moon, which you could distinguish out there too with both eyes closed, if you understood things as I do. You must not say one word about my letter, as I must be there myself, and shall leave here sometime next week for home, and when I get there, will be able to explain these things as the importance of the case demands.

My superintendent has been led off by some one, but I will get another. Nevertheless, I find more difficulties in our way as I progress, and nothing but shrewd work and absolute secrecy with some money will win the case for us. But of one thing rest assured, and that is that we have got one of the biggest schemes a-going you ever heard of, and we have made up our mind to win. Only keep your mouth as tight as a clam.

Give my love to all, and expect me in about 2 weeks.

Yours,

THEO.

Chapter VI

BUILDING A NEW AMERICAN INDUSTRY

Fast as the ocean steamer could plow its furrowless way across the Atlantic, the young pilgrim followed his cable and letter back to America in June, 1891. His heart was throbbing with a firm resolve. He was going to establish a full-fashioned hosiery plant as a new American industry. He had chosen the place for it. He was going to build it in Philadelphia.

Writing of this in a brief unpublished history over thirty years later, he said:

> Before beginning operations in Philadelphia, I came direct to Fort Wayne for a brief visit with the family, and an opportunity to map out a plan of action. Naturally, I filled the ears of my family and friends with the tale of my adventure abroad and the plans to organize a hosiery corporation in Philadelphia. "But why not in Fort Wayne?" was soon queried; and I explained why a small country town like Fort Wayne had nothing to offer in the way of helpful facilities and that hence the idea was absolutely impossible and not to be thought of. I argued that a textile business must be located in a textile center, just as a steel business groups around a steel center.

He told his Fort Wayne relatives and friends that the matter of choosing the right kind of location had been fully considered with his experienced advisers abroad, as his history recites.

> Before leaving Chemnitz, a rough draft of a plan for the proposed industry had been prepared. The capital was to be $250,000 to start with. Sufficient land was expected to be donated by real estate interests. Skilled labor was to settle in houses built by a real estate company. In 1891, Fort Wayne was still looked upon as a good farming town,

although the Bass Foundry & Machine Company and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company employed many workers. Women in industry or in offices or stores were little used then.

He explained that one-half or more of the workers in a hosiery plant would have to be women and girls and that therefore the plant should be located in a community of kindred industries employing men whose families could furnish female workers.

This was no industry for a farming community, nor for a financial or commercial center, but for a city in which could be found factories employing weavers, knitters, seamsters, dyers, printers, repair men, etc.; in other words, a city with a substantial amount of textile manufacturing.

Accordingly, he had already chosen Philadelphia as the ideal city where the future of the business could be assured. Philadelphia was an industrial metropolis. Philadelphia had soft water with dye-houses available for this new type of industry. But he was to learn that it was not easy for him to get away from his old home town of Fort Wayne. His history records:

It was not surprising, however, when Mr. Henry C. Paul, President of the Old National Bank, became interested in my enterprise, and asked me to call and talk it over. He was sold on the idea as soon as he heard my story, and insisted that it was my duty as a Fort Wayne citizen to locate in Fort Wayne, finally persuading me to postpone my trip to Philadelphia for a few days. A meeting of business men was called, which brought out clearly that Fort Wayne wanted this enterprise and could raise the money necessary. Things moved so fast and the pressure became so great that I forgot all the objections and dangers connected with locating such a highly skilled and complicated industry in a country town, away from the cooperation and helpful environment needed.

And so it was that he decided finally to build the new American industry in the town where he was born and reared. The place "where the three rivers meet" was to be the pioneer home of full-fashioned hosiery in America. One day in August 1891, the Wayne Knitting Mills was

organized with Mr. Paul, president; Charles S. Bash, vice-president; Wm. H. Dreier, treasurer; and Mr. Thieme, secretary-manager. The capital stock was $30,000. Mr. Thieme's cautious confederates insisted upon hedging the new venture with a small capitalization for testing the soundness of the plan. Thus, as he said, "if insurmountable difficulties should arise, the venture could be dropped with little loss."

Local interest developed rapidly and one of the first newspaper comments said:

Like the little boy on Christmas morning, Mr. T. F. Thieme will probably find a small fortune in his stocking. He is enabled to lay before such gentlemen, as he desires to interest with him in the business, such an array of facts and figures as seem to assure a big profit. Upon a recent visit to Chicago, Mr. Thieme mentioned his plans and was told that if he would locate such an industry in Chicago, he would not have to go outside that city to sell all the stockings he could make. He is busy organizing a stock company and several Fort Wayne gentlemen are down for $5,000 each. The project should be a sure winner.

With finances arranged, Mr. Thieme fared back across the Atlantic without delay to bring the Golden Fleece to its new home in America. He wrote of this:

I left Fort Wayne for Chemnitz, Germany, to buy machinery and equipment, engage knitters, and arrange for the many details necessary to bring the great enterprise to this country. An office was equipped and the work of deciding on the kind of machinery and equipment, the engaging of skilled labor, and similar details occupied my time and that of my agent. My knowledge of Germany and ability to speak German correctly, were of inestimable value in this work. Mr. Merritt, the U. S. Consul at Chemnitz, with some of his employees, gave me much valuable advice and practical assistance. I found the German machine builders to be men of fine business ability, honest and reliable in their dealings. No misunderstanding or dissatisfaction occurred in the entire transaction, either on the part of machinery purchases or the engaging of services and skilled labor. Machinery was to be shipped within sixty days of order, and labor was to leave within sixty days after shipment of machinery. When all was completed, I left for home, well satisfied with my work.

Arriving at New York, I arranged with an Immigration Institute to receive the people engaged upon their arrival and attend to forwarding them on to Fort Wayne. Factory quarters were rented in a building at the northeast corner of Main and Clinton Street, from corner to alley, and we proceeded to put them in a condition for installation of machinery and operation of the factory—a rather uncertain and difficult job.

With Fort Wayne's extremely hard water, the most difficult manufacturing problem was the dyeing, which required soft, clean water. There was no place for the dye-house but the basement, which was very unsatisfactory. A second-hand Otto type gas engine was installed to furnish power; then all was ready for the complicated foreign machinery and the skilled foreign workmen. The workmen came in September ahead of the machinery. Their anxiety to come to the land of "milk and honey and gold dollars" overcame them, and two dozen of them preceded the schedule. The Fort Wayne *News* under the heading, "Infant Industry" announced their arrival as follows:

An unusual sight was witnessed at the south depot this morning. From far away Chemnitz, in Saxony, Germany, came a number of intelligent immigrants to take positions for which they had been engaged by Mr. Thieme prior to his return to the U. S.

No estimate of the importance to Fort Wayne of this industry, can now be made. The little handful of German knitters who arrived today may be but the nucleus of a colony that shall number thousands within the next five years. Nor can anyone foretell the influence that the introduction of the industry may have upon the future of this city. That its details will be learned by hundreds of our own people seems assured, and the fact that Fort Wayne is the first city to acquire it, may give to this town an impetus that will place her in the front rank of American manufacturing cities.

Mr. Thieme is at present either in Philadelphia or New Jersey, buying yarn and material for the works.

This pioneer party consisted of twenty-three men, who were skilled knitters, and one woman, Mrs. Hartig, an experienced all around finisher, who was to teach and train help in the finishing departments. They formed the be-

ginning nucleus of what was to become a great American industry.

This beginning was quite humble. While awaiting the machines, knitters were put to work on the building—washing the windows and cleaning, painting, and whitewashing walls, floors, and woodwork. They had some trouble getting adjusted to American ways. Mr. Thieme wrote:

> Finally one day, the first load of machinery arrived! And with a 'Hurrah', the new factory was on its way. It is surprising what great changes employment through the arrival of a carload of machinery did make. Within a few days, the first knitted fabric made on these machines was exhibited to our stockholders. I carried a few samples as great curiosities, showing them to everybody I chanced to meet, and proud I was of them.

So the Wayne Knitting Mills went into operation in the fall of 1891. The "infant industry" was esthusiastically hailed by the local newspapers. Editors and reporters wrote articles which glowed with laudatory optimism and which carried a note of prophetic accuracy that would have astonished their authors. Here is a typical comment:

> Too much cannot be said of the enterprise and progressive spirit displayed by those of our citizens who have secured for Fort Wayne an industry which will, in all likelihood, turn out to be in the course of time, a very valuable and important industry. The progress of this new concern will be anxiously watched, not only in this city, but also abroad. There is more at stake than the establishment of a manufactory. Should this local industry prove successful, to Fort Wayne will belong the honor of introducing a revolution in the price and manufacture of hosiery.

The history of the Wayne Knitting Mills would in itself constitute an interesting volume. This biography can deal with those phases only that are related most intimately with the life of Mr. Thieme. However, it may be said truthfully that the history of Theodore Thieme is the history of the mills for nearly a third of a century. In his brief review from which some excerpts have already been quoted, he

made the following modest comment touching his responsibilities in that early stage.

> I soon learned that everybody depended on me. It was my undertaking and I must carry the responsibility. I was forced to get down to work and learn every detail of the manufacturing. And as soon as goods were ready for distribution, I also took over the selling end. Because the employees also learned that their future depended on the success of the business, which in turn depended on my success as manager, every man was eager to assist me to learn and understand the many details that make up a stocking. In a remarkably short time, therefore, I had acquired the knowledge usually requiring years to learn in the regular way, and my happy hours were spent in the factory inspecting and directing the work, while my unhappy hours of worry and hopeless planning were spent in the office. The dyehouse was a nightmare, our gas engine a joke. It would run awhile, then stop awhile, when all hands gathered around to help "get her started again." It was a constant "on again, off again!"

Almost immediately the new factory ran into difficulties. Not the least of these was the task of adjusting the transplanted Saxonians to the livelier tempo of American production methods. American factory routine presented a drastic change from the old-country individual home or "house industry," which permitted frequent recesses for refreshment. When order, at last, began to develop out of chaos, and the young manager had the little plant in full operation, he discovered that the knitters were not turning out goods in sufficient quantity to justify their comparatively high wages. They did not exert themselves because they had found that with the same amount of labor they could earn much more than at Chemnitz. Production simply had to be increased to cut costs and meet competitive cut prices of imported hose; and in desperation, Mr. Thieme reduced wages twice. Each time the scheme worked; and the knitters' earning came up to the old standard because of the new efficiency called forth. Those pioneer knitters proved that they really had pioneer stuff.

Financial difficulties soon plagued the new industry and harried its manager. Within a few months, the original

capital was exhausted. It was just about enough to get started with the necessary equipment and to bring over the workers and pay them for a brief period. The bank advanced money for a while, accepting the owners' stock for collateral; but eventually the situation grew desperate in spite of the loyal help of Mr. Paul and other directors. There were times when the faithful treasurer, Mr. Dreier, who was a druggist, actually cleared his till of the last quarter, dime, and nickel to help meet the pay-roll.

The first finished stockings were turned out for market in January, 1892. Mr. Thieme had demonstrated that, under the most adverse conditions, the new factory could produce the goods; and he set out hopefully with his samples, determined to keep the struggling industry alive through sales.

On this first selling trip, the young manager-salesman met with a sickening discouragement. Entering a leading store in Chicago, he offered his goods, showing samples of quality equal to and, in fact, identical with the Chemnitz article with which, of course, the buyer was familiar. This is what happened.

"And what is your price?" the buyer asked.

"We are offering these goods at $2.75 a dozen," was the proud answer. The buyer went to the desk nearby and returned with a box of hosiery made in Chemnitz, of the same quality and style.

"These cost us $2.25, laid down here," he said.

Visions of failure swept through the young American manufacturer's mind, as he faced this stunning competition. There was nothing to do but return home and take time to think. The Chemnitz manufacturers, with wages reduced to the barest living level, and the handful of New York importers had cut prices below actual cost in a determined effort to stem the newly arisen American competition.

It was the hardest of all the hard nuts that Mr. Thieme had to crack. He realized that the only possible way to meet the competitive prices was to increase output without in-

crease of cost. It was then that the workmen of the mill were called upon to increase their efficiency and consent to work for less per piece. It was bitter medicine but it worked; and before long the Wayne Knit hosiery, equal in every respect to the imported article, could meet the cut price of the foreign-made. Orders began to come in. Mr. Thieme commented upon some of his experiences as the original Wayne Knit salesman, as follows:

The novelty of our enterprise had received more or less publicity in the Press, especially politically, as an endorsement of the correctness and practicability of the McKinley Tariff Bill. This publicity was of great assistance to me when I introduced myself and product to merchants. I was given a sympathetic reception as a rule, but the idea of full-fashioned hosiery being made in Fort Wayne, Indiana, was looked upon with considerable suspicion. My samples would be critically inspected by the hosiery department, and then everybody from the "big boss" down to anyone of consequence in the store, was invited in to pass on the goods. The generally expressed opinion was that we imported the goods and were putting them out as American made.

When I heard the "American Made" expression the first time, I grasped the significance and importance of the term and added to our WAYNE KNIT TRADE MARK, "American Made for American Trade," which proved valuable to merchants in advertising our product. Within a few years, leading dry goods and department stores made exclusive WAYNE KNIT window displays as "American Made for American Trade," and "Manufactured in Fort Wayne, Indiana." Compared with imported goods, our hose showed up well in quality and price, but lacked the finish, a fault of our poor dyeing facilities and hard water. But as a rule, I carried away a good-will order, especially made attractive by my promise of giving the store exclusive agency in the city for WAYNE KNIT. In the drug business I had learned the importance of securing exclusive sale of a patent medicine or other article for my store, and this idea I decided to carry into this business, doing so with remarkable success.

It was natural enough that a skeptical American public was slow to recognize the reality of the New American Industry. Because for so many decades, practically all hosiery used in the United States was imported from Europe—90%

from Chemnitz—except a cheap, coarse, seamless hose, many merchants simply could not believe that America could produce full-fashioned hosiery equal to the Chemnitz article.

Illustrative of this general distrust is an incident often related by Mr. Thieme in later years. One day he was called upon at the mills by a gentleman from Louisville, who said he was on his way east and had stopped off to determine if the Wayne Knitting Mills *actually existed* and manufactured the "Matchless" brand of hosiery.

"Do you really make it here?" he asked.

"Come out and see," said Mr. Thieme.

And he showed him the machines at work. Convinced that the factory and product were no myth, the visitor declared:

"Then I've won my bet."

He explained that a skeptical Louisville merchant, to whom he had repeated a complimentary remark he had heard about the success of the new knitting works at Fort Wayne had denied that there was such a factory and said it was just a "protective tariff" campaign scheme and that the Wayne Knitting Mills imported all their hosiery from Chemnitz and merely sold it under their own brand. The merchant was so positive in his view that he had offered to bet $100 on it.

This early making and selling experience of the new American industry finally reached a crisis, that was resolved into a climax, which is best expressed in Mr. Thieme's own simple statement:

> Reaching a large western city, I was most fortunate in interesting a wide awake department store in the line and the idea of First American Made Full-Fashioned Hosiery. I was offered an order too large to seem real, and larger I knew than we could execute. But I was game and accepted with a trembling signature to the order, afraid to accept and afraid it might be cancelled all or in part before I got out of the store. But with that order in my pocket and stepping high, I packed up and left for home, without seeing another dealer. On the

train going home, my time was occupied in figuring out how to make the goods. Everything rested on me—the buying of the necessary yarns and materials, assignment of machinery, getting pay-roll money, supervision of the dyeing, finishing, and whatnot. Success attended my efforts, and the goods were shipped in fairly good time. We accomplished this by running the factory overtime from 7:00 A.M. to any time up to 9:00 P.M. o'clock.

But when these orders were filled, our last credit was exhausted; we were strapped. There was no use soliciting more business, since we could not make the goods. Our directors were escorting local business men through the busy factory, endeavoring to arouse interest and capital. We had a "bear by the tail," too big to handle, and too valuable to let go. On several nights I locked the doors with a firm determination to keep them locked.

Finally the critical day arrived on a Saturday, when I made all arrangements in the morning to close up for good that afternoon. There was no money on hand and none to be had for the week's pay-roll and other bills. But in the last mail that afternoon there came a check from the western firm, that looked as large as did the order given me. There was enough money to satisfy everything and everybody! The effect was magical, and I went home for the first night's sound rest in weeks.

Perhaps the most significant, as well as the most interesting part of the history of Mr. Thieme's early struggles with his new industry is the inside story of the running of the factory—how the workers and the machinery worked, or did not work; and how everything finally came through. It is a story filled with trying obstacles and nerve-wracking incidents, sometimes pathetic, sometimes humorous.

As if the financial and sales anxieties of the first few months did not constitute enough burden for one man, the inside management of the ill-situated little factory multiplied it. The story is best told in Mr. Thieme's own words, in the May, 1913, Wayne Knit *Ravlings,* which was then the new house organ of the mills.

The editor of Ravlings wants a reminiscent story of the good old times in the building on Clinton Street. That wouldn't be as easy for me as it would for the knitters, because the funny things were usually on me. For instance, I could not see the joke when the gas engine

stopped running every time the knitters got dry or hungry, or, the time when we needed money bad enough to chloroform a man to get it, and two gentlemen agreed to take some stock, but wanted to look over the plant first. I took them around and showed them our wonderful six section upright machines—I did not mention how they were eating up money and spoiling stockings.

Everything went fine until they stopped at a machine and asked the knitter how he was getting along. The knitter had evidently had a smash-up on the machine and was sore, so he cussed the machine, the country, the company, and everything and everybody and predicted that the whole business would bust up, yes, was already busted. He told the truth, but didn't know it. When he got through, my friends got cold feet, and the deal was off.

It didn't seem like a joke to me when at the end of the year, during the political campaign, the Democratic press in fighting protective tariff, claimed we had brought over a lot of the knitters and were paying them starvation wages, while we were growing rich. As a matter of fact, we were broke and expected to close the plant almost anytime. . . .

We once engaged a tramp dyer, who needed the money and could talk smoothly. We had no other place for a dye-house than the basement or cellar, and the dyer in order to draw a salary decided the cellar was all right. Our vats were put under the grates in the sidewalk, and when the steam was turned on and the hot vapor and the strong chemicals went sizzling out through the grates to the street and up through the thin floor, getting into the knitting machines, we learned something.

The dye-house in the cellar lasted about a week, but our money was gone, stockings were piling up, and no dye-house. That dyer, after drawing his pay before he was kicked out, probably had a good laugh —but I never could see the funny side of it.

However, funny things and jokes by others were of daily occurrence. Once, at least, the joke was on the other fellow. Another dyer, a fat, greasy, baldheaded fellow, full of knowledge and wisdom—showed us quickly where the other fellow made his mistake. So we rigged up things for him at considerable expense, and after two weeks we had a lot of goods dyed black that would rub off if you looked at them, and again I saw bankruptcy staring at me.

We decided everything was lost, but before quitting we decided to lick the dyer and get some satisfaction. So we called him upstairs and proceeded to tell him what was coming to him. It did not require much

hot stuff to frighten that dyer stiff, and before we could stop him, he jumped for the stairs and fairly flew down them and out the door, and I can still see his coat-tails sailing down the street. That was the last we ever saw of him, but we had a good laugh at least. Maybe that laugh made us forget to close the factory again.

So it is evident that in this early pioneering in hosiery-making, Mr. Thieme had to be at the bottom of it all. The jokes and the burdens were all on him. He assumed them and made the most of them. In his career as a druggist, he had learned well the lesson of looking after all details. Never did a good lesson stand anyone better in hand. If he had not been able to master the thousand and one problems and petty griefs that beset him constantly, the Wayne Knitting Mills could not have survived a single year.

Mr. Thieme availed himself constantly of every contact both in the factory and outside to improve himself in this new realm of building and managing. A casual glance through an old scrapbook which he compiled in the early nineties reveals his intense devotion to every technical detail of the industry. It contains literally scores of articles clipped from various trade journals, touching upon everything from international cotton yarn quotations to new air-cooling ventilation devices.

The duties of a personnel and employment director constituted no small part of his early responsibility. The employment of women in industry was then an almost revolutionary step in America; and the scarcity of competent girls to do the finishing work on the stockings was a recurrent hindrance from the start. The Fort Wayne *News* in the fall of 1892 quoted the firm's president, Mr. Paul, as follows:

One of the gravest problems that we have had to solve was the mooted question, can the employees who are available here, learn to do the work that has come to be almost second nature to the girls of Chemnitz. This subject has been definitely and satisfactorily solved. We have American girls who are developing remarkable skill, and our superintendent reports that some of them become even more expert

than the German girls, because their habit of quick thinking enables them more readily to catch the idea desired by their instructor.

So the Wayne Knitting Mills actually became a pioneer leader, in introducing women and girls into happy industrial life.

There were also various problems of foreign labor involved in those troublous early days. From time to time after the first handful of skilled Saxon knitters arrived to form a nucleus, additional knitters were brought over from Chemnitz. Most of them soon became adjusted to the new environment. However, because some of these men were trouble-makers, and incompetent besides, Mr. Thieme was forced to dismiss several men a few months after their arrival.

The Chemnitz Chamber of Commerce, intent upon placing every possible obstacle in the way of the newly threatening American competition, gave wide publicity to the complaints of these disgruntled immigrants, to discourage other skilled knitters from leaving Chemnitz. They charged, for instance, that the Wayne Knitting Mills enticed foreign workmen with the promise of large wages which failed to materialize after the men had arrived in Fort Wayne.

The Fort Wayne *Staats-Zeitung,* published for the German-speaking populace of the city, carried numerous articles from Chemnitz; and the *Labor Herald* took up the cudgels against this "endangering of American native workmen by cheap imported labor." To offset these disturbing attacks, Mr. Thieme went so far as to publish in February, 1892, an affidavit stating wages paid throughout the factory to both men and women. This published statement made him smile in later years when he compared those low early wages with the high earnings ten years later.

Naturally, the Wayne Knitting Mills, as an infant industry, became involved in politics. Mr. Thieme was quick to realize that prospect as a factor of national importance. His entry into politics, months before the first stocking

was ever finished, was inevitable. Fort Wayne was strongly democratic and the majority of the directors and stockholders of the mills were almost rabid Cleveland "free-trade men." However, this did not at all deter them from investing in the "protected" infant industry. Mr. Thieme from the very start proclaimed to the world that the Wayne Knitting Mills was a direct result of the McKinley tariff bill sponsored by the Republican party. His reasons were first, of course, an inherent desire to give credit where credit was due, and second—and perhaps more vital—a keen advertising intuition which suggested an avenue of almost priceless publicity for his struggling little business.

Here it may be oberved that among the other ramifications of his managerial job was that of advertising and publicity man. He handled all the advertising for the mills in its early days, and even after an expert advertising department was installed, he continued to give this feature special attention. He took ready advantage of all the advertising possibilities of the early political agitation in which his little industry was involved.

As an example of the publicity which he inspired on selling trips, it is interesting to note these excerpts from a front page issue of *The Toledo Blade,* Sept. 29, 1891.

"By forcing wages of the laboring man, and skilled labor at that, to the lowest possible verge, the manufacturers of Europe have been making themselves millionaires for years. Eighty per cent of the product of their mills has been bought by consumers in the United States. They have been living off the people of this country, and now that the new McKinley bill has passed and become a law, they are its enemies because it cuts off their income."

The speaker, a young man, a typical business man, bright, keen and observant, was T. F. Thieme of Fort Wayne, the manager of extensive manufactories, as he sat in an easy chair at the Toledo Custom-House this morning.

"The general effect of the McKinley bill, to say it in a few words," continued Mr. Thieme, "will be to make the United States the greatest manufacturing country in the world and to cheapen the products to the customer. I am able to back these statements by facts and figures.

In the six months from October 1, 1890, to April 1, 1891, over 2000 new manufacturing plants were put into operation in this country. Most of them are manufacturing goods which we imported before, almost entirely.

"I am now going into the hosiery business in Fort Wayne. With the advantage of a close home market and the greater advantage of latest machinery, we shall be able to employ hundreds of people and increase our home consumption of the farmer's products."

On October 19, 1892, Mr. Thieme wrote an open letter to the American Protective Tariff League. Considering that the mills were scarcely yet in operation, his opening sentences certainly reflect the primary advertising principle of maintaining a strong front:

Our establishment has been in operation since last fall, and owes its existence to the McKinley tariff. We have had very good success with our product; hosiery men acknowledge our hosiery to be equal to the imported, and today our hosiery is on sale from New York to California, with a good future ahead. We did not go into business for politics, but as a legitimate business venture.

Our imports from Chemnitz and other hosiery centers amount annually to about $20,000,000. One of the questions to be decided at the next election is "Shall we continue to send $20,000,000 annually to Europe and make more millionaires and help support more people who spend their money in Europe?"

Republican newspapers and textile trade journals quoted this letter widely. A Fort Wayne Democratic editor wrote:

A Fort Wayne establishment, by the action of its secretary, Mr. Theodore F. Thieme, has become a factor in politics.

As political tension mounted in the months before the election in November, 1892, Mr. Thieme and his little stocking factory came more and more into the limelight. As a protectionist, he contributed several articles to the newspapers. The loyal Democratic members of his board of directors, including the president, Mr. Paul, openly censured his stand. Republican orators and editors extolled the mills as a direct benefit of the McKinley bill, while their Democratic opponents bitterly blasted it as a failure and a fraud on the public. They charged that the labor was overworked

and paid pauper wages and that the men were dissatisfied and wanted to return to Germany. Of course, this was an echo from Chemnitz. The Wayne Knitting Mills was held up as a horrible example of the so-called "benefits" of the McKinley Bill. Mr. Thieme wrote:

> This impelled me to publish a statement, setting forth the number of employees, both imported and local, their wages, and hours of work —all sworn to before a notary. According to this statement of 1893, knitters earned $9.00 to $12.00 per week, boys $4.00 to $5.00, girls $3.00 to $6.00, and overseers up to $8.00 a week. Evidently, these were high wages then, or I would not have broadcast the list.

Cleveland's victory in November served for the time being to ease the political pressure upon the young secretary-manager. Temporarily, the protective policy for which he had fought seemed doomed; but his two main objectives had been won. The Wayne Knitting Mills was nationally known, and his views on American-made hosiery and the importation of skilled knitters were generally accepted.

After one dark year, things were beginning to look up; orders and money were coming in and the plant was operating in lively fashion. National trade journals referred to domestic manufacture of full-fashioned hosiery at Fort Wayne as a successful and established fact.

So Mr. Thieme was able finally to persuade the directors that the industry had demonstrated that it could be operated successfully over here and that no insurmountable difficulties had appeared. As a result the capital stock was increased to $100,000 and plans were made to erect a new plant. It is significant that this first stock increase was placed with considerable difficulty. As Mr. Thieme explains:

> In those days the little surplus capital of our citizens was invested in savings accounts and real estate; buying stocks and bonds was still a novelty. The Jenney Electric Light Company, now the General Electric Company, equipped our new plant with electric motors and the Bass Foundry installed the steam boilers, to be paid for in Wayne Knitting Mills stock.

The difficulties in increasing capital arose from several

causes, such as the tariff controversy, opposition from certain business interests, the novelty of and ignorance of the industry, and lastly timidity of capital in a small city like Fort Wayne.

In January, 1893, the Wayne Knitting Mills left the rented store buildings for a new substantial two-story brick building, with separate dye-house and power-plant, at the intersection of the Nickel Plate and Lake Erie railways in the western edge of town, where the big plant stands today. The first milestone in the building of a new American industry had been passed. Commenting on this, Mr. Thieme said:

> The day we moved the plant to the new location was a day of thanksgiving for us, especially the imported employees, who saw success for the industry in the new factory building, something plainly impossible in the rented store buildings. Some additional knitting machinery was imported for the new plant, and with it additional knitters, and at last I realized that we had a real factory and a wonderful future.

In a little less than three years Thieme had envisioned a whole industry transplanted from one country to another; had made the necessary delicate arrangements for this transplantation; had organized a company; and through two years of financial and political hardships, had served as secretary and manager, constituting himself the entire sales and advertising force for an unknown product. Indeed, he was the motivating spirit behind every turn of the wheel in the plant. Undoubtedly, Mr. Thieme's rigid training in the manifold details of the drugstore business prepared him well for accepting the thousand and one details that came his way in the hosiery knitting business—a business that was almost a stranger in a strange land, with absolutely no American retail or other connections in 1891.

For the next seven years, he continued to bear this complete responsibility, working practically day and night and finding little if any time for pleasure. He bought the yarns,

needles, and machines; obtained men and women employees; handled the finances and trade outlets and advertising; took care of collections; met the pay-rolls; and fixed all salaries and piece-work wages. As active plant manager he originated every factory order and every bit of routine—literally thousands of activities, big and little. Surprisingly enough, this all-in-one executive actually created every style and change of hosiery, fixing selling prices and rules from the very beginning until the end of his career. Lastly, he conceived and supervised all additions and improvements to the plant and its machinery while guiding its policies.

This brings the narrative again into the story of the organic growth of the lusty infant industry after its first desperate year or so. His "Matchless" brand of hosiery was meeting with such growing public favor that two years after removal to the new site, Mr. Thieme expanded facilities by the addition of $30,000 worth of machinery which had just been installed in Dover, Del., by a foreign machine builder for demonstration purpose. New machinery was also bought from Germany the next year. In 1895, the mills were employing 175 persons and running twenty-two hours a day in three shifts. A Fort Wayne newspaper on March 5, 1895, said:

> The Wayne Knitting Mills have had a phenomenal growth. The products of the mills compare favorably with the imported goods. They are sold chiefly in eastern cities, but the trade with western cities is growing rapidly. There is hardly any limit to its possibilities.

There being no money to be had in Fort Wayne, Mr. Thieme conceived the idea that some leading New York importers of silk goods from Europe might have money available for this purpose, as several of them were closing up business because of the increasing manufacture of silk dress goods in the United States. Following this idea vigorously, he interested one of such silk importers, Mr. William A. Spies, who came to Fort Wayne bringing along Mr. John C. Marin, an auditor, to investigate and inspect

the plant. After spending two weeks in the plant and in the office over the books, Mr. Marin's report was so satisfactory to Mr. Spies as to induce him promptly to make a large subscription of stock; and his auditor, Mr. Marin, became so enthusiastic over the business and its prospects that he likewise made a substantial subscription. When directors and stockholders were informed of this, they fell over each other to secure for themselves the full amount of stock available to them. So in 1898 the capital was increased to $200,000 and later that same year, to $250,000. A New York office and stockroom were opened.

It is worthy of repetition here that it was in the course of this financial development that Mr. Thieme was privileged to hear a confirmation of the business worth and integrity of his father—an incident that has been mentioned in a previous chapter.

Some unique labor troubles of foreign complexion arose occasionally. From 1891, additional expert knitters were induced by Mr. Thieme to leave Chemnitz for Fort Wayne individually or in small family groups. Although they adapted themselves fairly well to the New World situation, yet it was hard for them to forget entirely some of their old Saxonian ways. For instance, in the fall of 1895, the knitters "walked out" for a few days because they were required to pay for their own needles—"an unheard of thing in Germany," as the newspapers quoted them. Mr. Thieme made good his point that breakage of needles and consequent loss of time would be minimized by requiring the men to buy their own needles at a small cost with beneficial results for everybody.

There were also some other more serious complications of an international nature. At the time of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the mills were actually being referred to as the Allen County Chemnitz, because of the influx of Saxonian knitters and because of Fort Wayne's growing prominence as a full-fashioned hosiery center. This

stirred the indignation of Chemnitz hosiery manufacturers to white heat. They filed a suit against the Wayne Knitting Mills on the grounds that it was evading the alien contract labor law. Mr. Thieme, with his attorneys, argued this matter at a meeting in Washington before Mr. Powderly, U. S. Commissioner, and his official associates. The U. S. Commissioner General of Immigration ruled in favor of the Wayne Knitting Mills. He held that its activities were legitimate under the provision that skilled labor "not to be had in this country" could be imported; for skilled knitters were "not to be had in this country" at that time. It is worth noting that this decision, which was internationally publicized, opened wide the doors of American immigration in a select field. It started a flow of skilled foreign workers and artists of every trade and profession which brought incalculable benefits to our country at that stage of its economic history.

More and more alarmed at this growing American competition, the German industrialists continued their attempts to catch the mills in illegal acts. However, in the *Journal Gazette* of May 5, 1900, Mr. Thieme put a stop to this foreign opposition forever with the official statement:

> So far as we are concerned, we require no more skilled labor. We are well established now, and old enough to rely entirely for additional labor upon our own apprentices. We get excellent results from American boys, starting them at the age of fifteen, in a three years' apprenticeship course.

As to how well the firm had become established in these first hectic days, the following article entitled "Full-fashioned Hose" from the *Dry Goods Economist* of August 27, 1898, bears witness:

> As an instance of what can be done by perseverance and pluck in the establishment of a new industry in this country, the Wayne Knitting Mills, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, are a fair example. Twelve years ago such a thing as the manufacture of full-fashioned hosiery in the United States was scarcely dreamed of, and where it was suggested the idea was scouted as impracticable and absurd. It was

said that the process was so slow and expensive and that the wages paid in the European hosiery centers were so low that no profit could be made on any full-fashioned hosiery that could be made here.

To T. F. Thieme must be given the credit of differing from these opinions and backing up his ideas by solid and persistent work. About ten years ago he established, in conjunction with others, at Fort Wayne, Indiana, a mill for the manufacture of full-fashioned hosiery. After several years of vigorous struggling, in the face of opposition both at home and abroad, he succeeded in putting the new industry on its feet and on a substantial and paying basis.

The Wayne Knitting Company is the pioneer in this industry in America, and its success has led to the establishment in other parts of the country by other concerns of substantial plants for knitting the same class of goods.

The year 1898 saw other notable expansions in the mills besides the large increase in capital stock already mentioned. Through his intimate knowledge of industrial conditions in Germany, Mr. Thieme evolved a scheme to enlarge production without any considerable further outlay of money. He succeeded in inducing two German manufacturers to move their plants with their skilled operatives to Fort Wayne under contract with the Wayne Knitting Mills to finance and house them and also guarantee to take their output at a price of cost plus a certain per cent for profit. It proved to be a sound idea and brought valuable increases of better qualities of hosiery. After a few years, both of these were merged in the ownership of the mills.

With the ever-expanding market, Mr. Thieme decided in that year to increase the line of production by adding a seamless department of children's ribbed hose and infants' socks to his regular output of men's and women's full-fashioned hosiery. This was accomplished without the use of the mills' much needed capital by organizing the United Knitting Mills as an independent plant, operating in conjunction with the Wayne Knitting Mills. The parent plant finished and marketed the goods and put them out under the popular trade mark, "Pony Stockings," the famous Pony Rough Rider Hose. This venture was very successful, and in 1902 the

United Knitting Mills was merged with the Wayne Knitting Mills, whose capital stock was then increased to $425,000.

So the time came when the hopeful founder and builder of this new American industry found his situation happily reversed. From a state of being all but overwhelmed with beginning difficulties, he had struggled through to a plane upon which he found all his resources challenged to meet the expanding opportunities that his successes brought upon him. Needless to say, he met his increasing opportunities just as he had met his menacing hardships. The plant was steadily expanded; a new office building was erected and the capacity of the dye-house was doubled.

The Textile World, in a complimentary article in 1901, said in part:

> The equipment of the Wayne Knitting Mills is of the best. The ventilation, lighting and heating are subjects of special attention. Although the water of Fort Wayne is excellent, they have installed a purifying and softening system of their own, and have their own fire fighting company and apparatus. Every pair of hose goes through thirteen departments and is handled by eighteen different persons. The dye-house constitutes a model institution in itself.

In keeping with the fanciful enthusiasms that always attend the marked success of a new venture, the realization that American hosiery manufacture was an established fact brought much public agitation, amounting almost to a fashion craze, for impracticable improvements in rare stockings, especially for women. Of the many novelties suggested, one of the most inviting, which received perhaps the greatest attention from the press and the cartoonists, was the so-called pocket-stocking. Its announced usefulness was to give women a safety-pocket on the welt or hem of their hose, where pickpockets in those days could not reach it. Short skirts were not yet known. So far as known, however, no single improvement suggested by amateurs was adopted as practical. All improvements to stockings adopted and put in into effect were conceived and originated in the factory in co-operation between the management and

chiefs of knitting departments. Among the many new features introduced with significant trademarks were the following: "Wayne Knit Matchless", "Pony Stockings" for children, "Indestructible," "Flare Top," "Welcome," "Waynew," "Stop Run," and "Athletic." These were all developed under Mr. Thieme's personal supervision, and the brands were largely of his own selection.

While disdaining many impractical ideas that were urged upon him, he was the first American manufacturer to meet the growing rage for fancier hosiery by producing lace stockings, concerning which, the *American Knit Goods Review,* in July, 1902, carried this significant note under the caption "American Lace Hose":

> Six machines, costing $4,000 each, have been brought from Germany by the Wayne Knitting Mills and have been set up by experts from the machine builders, who will instruct the operators in the manufacture of high-grade lace hose and half-hose. These machines are the first of the kind to be set up in the United States. This class of hosiery will retail from 75c to $1.50 per pair.

Incidentally, it may be remarked here that the introduction of these new high speed machines, combined with the starting of the new apprentice system about that time, brought on in the summer of 1902 a strike which was terminated without serious difficulty.

The infant industry grew literally by leaps and bounds throughout the first decade of the 20th century.

In May, 1904, Mr. Thieme was able to show at the annual directors' meeting an increase of 20% over any preceding year and a payroll of 883 employees. 1904 was perhaps the big boom year. This was probably due largely to Mr. Thieme's promulgation of an outstanding advertising idea, which grew out of his conception of the significance of international expositions. It is best presented in his own restrained language:

> At the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, I had my first vision of large publicity, and planned to supply some Midway "high life" concessions with WAYNE KNIT hosiery for the "ladies," receiving some

publicity in return. But our best at that time was not classy enough for the display necessary, and the idea was dropped. But when in 1904, the St. Louis World's Fair was projected, we had advanced sufficiently to attempt a creditable display. In an artistic pavilion that we had constructed, a large new design lace knitting machine was erected and manned by one of our best knitters. This was operated continuously all summer during the life of the Fair, making beautiful designs of lace stockings. This machine was a novelty—the first such machine on public exhibition anywhere. World's Fair visitors, both merchants and the public, crowded around this exhibition from morning till night. We carried a full line of our product on display, and conducted a PONY STOCKING guessing contest, with one hundred Shetland ponies as prizes, as a drawing attraction. This display, while rather expensive, put the Wayne Knitting Mills on the map as a national institution and increased our list of customers too fast for our production to meet.

Mr. Thieme gave close personal attention to this comprehensive display, commuting back and forth between Fort Wayne and St. Louis, sometimes by auto over dirt roads, but more often by rail. He was gratified that this exhibit drew a grand prize from the International Jury of Awards.

It was in this year of 1904, that Mr. Thieme introduced his profit-sharing and welfare plan, that is explained fully in the next chapter. In fact, 1904 was prolific with spring boards for the Wayne Knitting Mills.

It is interesting to note that it was about this time that Fort Wayne actually came to a full realization of the true value of the Wayne Knitting Mills. Up to this time there had been a fair demonstration of the truth that "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." Mr. Thieme still finds relish in the following bit of history, which he, himself, penned many years later.

The Fort Wayne **Journal Gazette**, at that time a most influential newspaper in Northern Indiana, was conducted by Mr. Andy Moynihan. One year he traveled extensively in the West, as far as California, and upon his return, he called on me to say, that he was astonished to find show-windows of the largest and most representative stores in

Wayne Knitting Mills Pavilion at St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. (Mr. Thieme at left of center entrance.)

every city, large and small, displaying WAYNE KNIT HOSIERY as "Made in Fort Wayne, Indiana." It was his conviction that the W. K. M. was advertising Fort Wayne grandly throughout the nation, and that Fort Wayne citizens should know about it.

This gratifying local recognition was emphasized further in a graphic manner through a cartoon by Bert Griswold in the Fort Wayne *News,* December 14, 1905, entitled "Fort Wayne Makes Business for Santa." It showed Santa Claus gesturing toward the Wayne Knit plant, above which a sign read:

"We made 11,520,000 stockings this year." Old Santa is saying: "Well! Well! If this isn't the stockingest town I ever struck. Here they've got a factory that turns out more fine hose than any other in the wide, wide world. And its mayor-elect is Hosey. By the way, I wonder if a man like that wouldn't be apt to 'sock' it to a ward 'heeler' if he refused to 'toe' the mark."

An accompanying article estimated that the year's production if laid end to end would more than reach from New York to the Golden Gate and back. There was no difficulty in making stock increases after this.

Prosperity rode high in 1905, and Mr. Thieme's plan to provide needed expansion capital by issuing $275,000 of preferred cumulative stock met no opposition. His report at the annual May meeting showed a payroll of 1,100 employees. A new power plant and other additions went up; but a shortage of girl labor for the various finishing processes became a serious problem, which the secretary-manager promptly solved by establishing branch finishing plants in Columbia City, Bluffton, Garrett, and Roanoke—towns of from 5,000 to 10,000—all within a radius of about twenty-five miles of Fort Wayne.

As an index to the national importance already attained by the Fort Wayne plant, the *Textile American,* November, 1905, carried a laudatory article on the mills, saying:

It is well to remember, that this mill was the first successful manufacturer of full-fashioned hosiery in America. Naturally, the mill experienced the many reverses incident to starting a new enterprise,

but nevertheless, it soon acquired a prosperous business and dealers quickly became convinced of the merits of American-made hosiery.

In 1907, business grew faster than the plant could expand. Extra dividends were declared, salesmen were called off the road, and Mr. Thieme had to exert his best diplomacy to mollify customers whose orders he could not fill. But it was in 1908 that his infant industry finally hit the "big time" as a "million-dollar baby" with a capitalization of that sizable sum. Bert Griswold, the *News* artist, drew a cartoon entitled "A Million in the Sock." The little plant which the young ex-druggist had started in 1891 with $30,000, had so completely won the public confidence that the new stock issue was quickly oversubscribed.

It is timely, perhaps, to pause briefly in this recital of the phenomenal development of this infant industry in its successive stages of lusty expansion to note its exit from the American political world and to observe the ready adaptation of its founder and builder to fundamentally changed political relations. In 1908, the still poignant issue of the high protective tariff brought Mr. Thieme once more into the publicity of a national election. The Democratic party was campaigning for "tariff for revenue only," and ardent Fort Wayne Republicans sought to further their cause by referring to the great knitting mills as a child of the Republican high protective tariff—much as in 1892. But times were different in 1908. The mills did not need any longer the extreme, high protective tariff to offset foreign competition, and Mr. Thieme was the first to recognize and express the significance of the change. In the *Journal Gazette* of October 20, 1908, he was quoted to this effect:

> The executive officers regret exceedingly that the institution should have been dragged into politics. It has no place there. The officers believe that the tariff question should be kept out of politics and settled by a non-partisan commission.

Immediately following Taft's election, the matter of tariff revision loomed as a paramount issue before the next con-

gress. The Payne Tariff Bill proposed an increase in the tariff on hosiery and gloves. Mr. Thieme placed the mills in an extremely favorable light in the minds of nation-wide consumers by flatly declaring against any such increase, in an open letter May 18, 1909, to Senators and Representatives from Indiana, and to his retailers. He wrote, in part:

> We are opposed to any change from the present hosiery schedule of the Dingley Bill. 1st, an advance is not needed because all full-fashioned hosiery manufacturers, including ourselves, have operated successfully under the protection afforded us. 2nd, on the other hand, the tariff should not be lowered, because no inordinate profits have been made, as a healthy foreign competition has been maintained.

Other American hosiery manufacturers organized as the National Association of Hosiery and Underwear Manufacturers, who had lobbied for the increase in hosiery schedules in the Payne bill, angrily attacked Mr. Thieme's arguments through a lengthy open letter in the *Dry Goods Economist* of June 5, 1909. Unwittingly, these competitors of Wayne Knit paid a glowing tribute, in stating:

> The Wayne concern sells a branded article. People buy a 'name' on which there is no competition, either foreign or domestic. They got, by their letter declaring against the Payne schedule, a colossal piece of free advertising, such as a fortune could not buy.

The letter further implied that the mills believed in reduction of wages rather than increase of the tariff, to which accusation Mr. Thieme replied in the *Dry Goods Economist* of June 12, 1909:

> I pronounce this false in every particular. The Wayne Knitting Mills are not going to publish a promise that they will not reduce wages, but now publish the fact that they have already increased wages. The Scriptures tell us, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

This effectually silenced the detractors. Mr. Thieme had made his point before a nation-wide audience of retail merchants, as well as all hosiery-wearing Americans, that while maintaining a high wage standard and low prices, the mills

had successfully met both foreign and home competition. Nowadays, it will not be difficult for any business or advertising man to discern the real ingenuity which underlay the Wayne Knit side of this stirring tariff controversy a generation ago. In other words, the infant was no longer in need of "swaddling" clothes. It had grown to man size and its astute founder, builder, and manager was determined that the world should take note of it.

It may seeem superfluous to continue the recital of the rapid growth of an industry which continued so regularly as to become almost monotonous in its constructive progress. However, two more notable additions must be recorded. These were the building of the silk mill, known as Thieme Brothers Company, in 1909, and the absorption of the Old Fort Knitting Mills in 1912. Both of these reflected the remarkable foresight of Mr. Thieme. He appreciated the rising standards of American life, demanding better, finer things, particularly in dress and especially for women. Feminine styles, such as the raising of the hem line, brought fine hosiery into ever greater prominence. He sensed the demand for more and finer stockings and decided to build a factory devoted exclusively to the making of fine silk hosiery. With expert assistance, he spent several weeks in New York City and adjoining industrial regions such as Camden, New Jersey, where the silk industry devoted to the manufacture of ribbons, piece goods, and the like, including preparation of raw silk, its dyeing, and similar processes, had been developed, making an intensive study of every operation and taking copious notes in long hand that were written up in complete detail upon his return.

In April, 1909, Thieme Brothers was established as a separate corporation with a capital of $150,000 for the purpose of manufacturing silk hosiery exclusively, to be marketed by the Wayne Knitting Mills and to be run in conjunction with the main plant. It was not many years until this plant became a half million dollar concern. Mr. Thieme and his three brothers held the major stock. It

was a distinct success from the start and brought many new skilled workers to Fort Wayne whose invasion was signalized in a graphic cartoon by Griswold, depicting an army of silk worms advancing upon the city.

Public appreciation was expressed in a Fort Wayne editorial, headed, "Our Home Product," which said in part:

> It seems but yesterday that the W. K. M. were established in a couple of rooms at the northeast corner of Main and Clinton Streets. Today that industry has grown—perhaps not beyond the dreams of its founder, but certainly beyond the expectations of others who watched its humble beginning. The growth of so many large manufacturing institutions in a few years is a commentary and a good one, on the excellence of the men Fort Wayne has produced.

The Old Fort Knitting Mills, purchased by the Wayne Knitting Mills in 1912, was organized by a group of representative Fort Wayne business men in 1909 as a competitor. It was a recognition of the success of hosiery manufacture in Fort Wayne. Mr. Thieme advised these men sincerely against this move and gave his reasons in the public press. He considered it a serious mistake to start competition of that kind in Fort Wayne, as the shortage of girl labor would injure both competitors and be detrimental to the community. He tried earnestly to induce these men, who were friends of his, to start, instead, an industry employing men, which would bring laborers' families with more working girls to help stabilize industrial conditions and provide help in homes also, where it was badly needed because of the growing demand for women in industry. He offered to contribute liberally to the capitalization of a new factory for working men. His admonition proved to be only too sound. Notwithstanding strong financial backing, the Old Fort Knitting Mills failed in three years. It became the East Branch of the Wayne Knitting Mills. A South Branch was also maintained for some years to accommodate working girls in that section of the city.

Mr. Thieme was made president of the Wayne Knitting Mills in 1910, in addition to being general manager; and

the business both of the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Brothers Company continued to expand as if by ever widening circles from a common center. In 1911, the capitalization of WKM was increased to $1,200,000 and Thieme Brothers Company to $200,000. It is not essential here to continue the recital of that phenomenal progress. Suffice it to say that Mr. Thieme continued to direct every detail of the large business throughout the days of its greatness with the vision, energy, and care with which he had founded and built it. The well-known truism that "An institution is the lengthening shadow of one man" was never applied with greater truth than in the history of Theodore F. Thieme and the pioneer American hosiery plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

It is essential to this historical biography that its subject be seen as thousands upon thousands have seen him and still remember him, living and working at the very heart of his unique institution. For many years, during his most active period in the mill, a daily record was kept of his decisions, plans, and meetings, for future reference. A well-known overseer, in touch with the record, recently jotted down the following general summary of Mr. Thieme's average day.

In the morning between 7:00 and 8:00, Mr. Thieme would be seen briskly walking west on Main Street, preceded by Knit, the large St. Bernard mascot of Wayne Knit. The distance from his home to the factory was about one mile, and he enjoyed the walk twice each day.

In his office he would first look hurriedly over his personal mail; then, donning his familiar old soft grey felt hat he would start his trip through the factory, visiting every department, inspecting the work, consulting with foremen and inspectors, meanwhile entering on a yellow pad all items requiring further attention. Mr. Thieme could not trust his memory with hundreds of big and little items gathered during the day. His yellow pad became as familiar as his grey hat.

He observed carefully the work and demeanor of all employees, always with a cheerful good morning and a friendly word or a cautious reminder to each one—foreman, forelady, and workman.

EAST BRANCH
WAYNE
KNITTING
MILLS

Knit, Wayne Knitting Mills Mascot.
From Painting by Edm. Osthaus.

Back to his office between 10:30 and 11:00, there started immediately a stream of foremen and foreladies, overseers and inspectors, summoned for consultation on things he had noted on his trip through the mill. Thus he checked off one by one the memoranda he had made on his visit through the factory.

After this, his secretary was called for further notes and dictation, covering the urgent factory matters of the morning together with general correspondence.

Twelve o'clock—lunch, either at the factory club house, just across the street or at the Anthony Hotel or Chamber of Commerce. Stop in the bank; a visit at the Morris Plan, of which he was president; probably a call on one of the local customers, and back to office about 1:30.

About this time Mr. Thieme would indulge in his daily habit of finding complete rest, sitting in a comfortable arm chair taking a short nap. This was a most beneficial habit that Mr. Thieme started early in life, and to this day still continues—what he considers the best recuperative tonic known.

Then the first cigar of the day—his only smoke during factory hours—while he talked and conferred with one of the administrative officers, assistant manager, superintendent, treasurer, advertising manager, sales manager, or office manager.

Then dictation, clean-up of his desk, followed by a trip to the silk mills, for general inspection and consultation. Midafternoon, a board meeting—of his own or of one of the companies on which he held a directorship—would take him away from office for an hour or two; but always he returned to office for the closing hour, to sign mail and take care of any matters that had developed during his absence.

Most often he would be about the last one to leave the building, after a brief meeting with the watchman. Then a walk home with big Knit, probably returning later for some meeting at the Club House or for emergency night work at the factory.

There was nothing about the mill, either on the inside or on the grounds, too small to escape his attention. He would not pass without making note of an unpainted or soiled box, bench, or partition and could not abide unkempt floors or tables. There had to be order and neatness everywhere and all the time.

Before each Christmas, he always spent most of the day shaking hands with hundreds of employees, giving cheery greetings and many presents. Year after year, he

practiced sending a Christmas turkey to at least fifty selected Wayne Knit homes.

It is of some interest to mention here that the canines, Knit, referred to in the notes of the overseer quoted above, and Mutt, a small Pekingese who came later, really were important factors in the life of Mr. Thieme. Knit, who was awarded first prize as a noble specimen of Rough Coat St. Bernard in December, 1905, was run over and killed by a Nickel Plate train near the mills February 14, 1911. His death was a shock to the entire factory, where he had been for many years a universal favorite. The factory was closed for fifteen minutes and all employees attended the burial ceremony. Everyone felt heart-sick. Mr. Thieme treasures among his choicest art collections a painting of Knit by Edmund Osthaus, the famous dog painter.

Mutt, the diminutive Pekingese, who continued to live as a faithful companion of Mr. Thieme several years after he left the mills, died a natural death at an advanced age. He rests in a well-marked grave at Thieme Gardens.

As the factory expanded, Mr. Thieme took three of his brothers into the business, one at a time—Frederick in 1898, John in 1907, and Gottlieb (Lipes) in 1909. His family pride and brotherly affection induced him to offer these brothers the benefits to be derived from participation in this fine, profitable business; and they occupied the various important positions entrusted to them with credit to themselves and to the institution. When the two factories were sold in 1923 and 1925, he had the great satisfaction of knowing that his hopeful intentions of earlier years in offering his brothers the opportunity of sharing in his good fortune by joining the factory staff, had been realized.

Other strong and capable leaders, selected and trained by Mr. Thieme, played highly important parts. To all of these, as well as to the great army of employees, TF, as he was often familiarly called, was "the boss." At times, he has been referred to as the "Big Boss," the "Czar," the "Autocrat," and "Little Napoleon." It was all the same. Natural

circumstances made it inevitable that he should assume responsibility for everything all the time. In other chapters of this book, the superb organization and perfect system will be explained whereby he was able through his well-trained heads of departments to keep a directing hand on every detail of the work. The mill was his life—a part of him. In every controversy or emergency, he placed its welfare first, regardless of personal consequences.

During the World War years, from 1914 to 1919, it seemed often that the mills would have to close, as most American hosiery plants did, because of a want of foreign dyes for which there were no American substitutes. But Mr. Thieme refused to close. He said: "It would not be fair to our workers. We have always kept running and we will continue to run." Vast quantities of undyed goods were piled up with serious possibilities of loss. There being no prospects of dyestuffs for some time to come, Mr. Thieme decided to put out bleached white hose, and for that purpose built a new addition to the dye-house, devoted exclusivsly to bleaching. The general shortage of hosiery, due to closing of many plants, brought on a ready sale for this white bleached hosiery, with the result that the immense quantity of goods piled up during the year found a ready sale at good prices. In due course, American chemists solved the dye problem for all time to come. So by the foresight of the manager and his consideration for the best interests of all, the Wayne Knitting Mills enjoyed its most profitable period during those critical years.

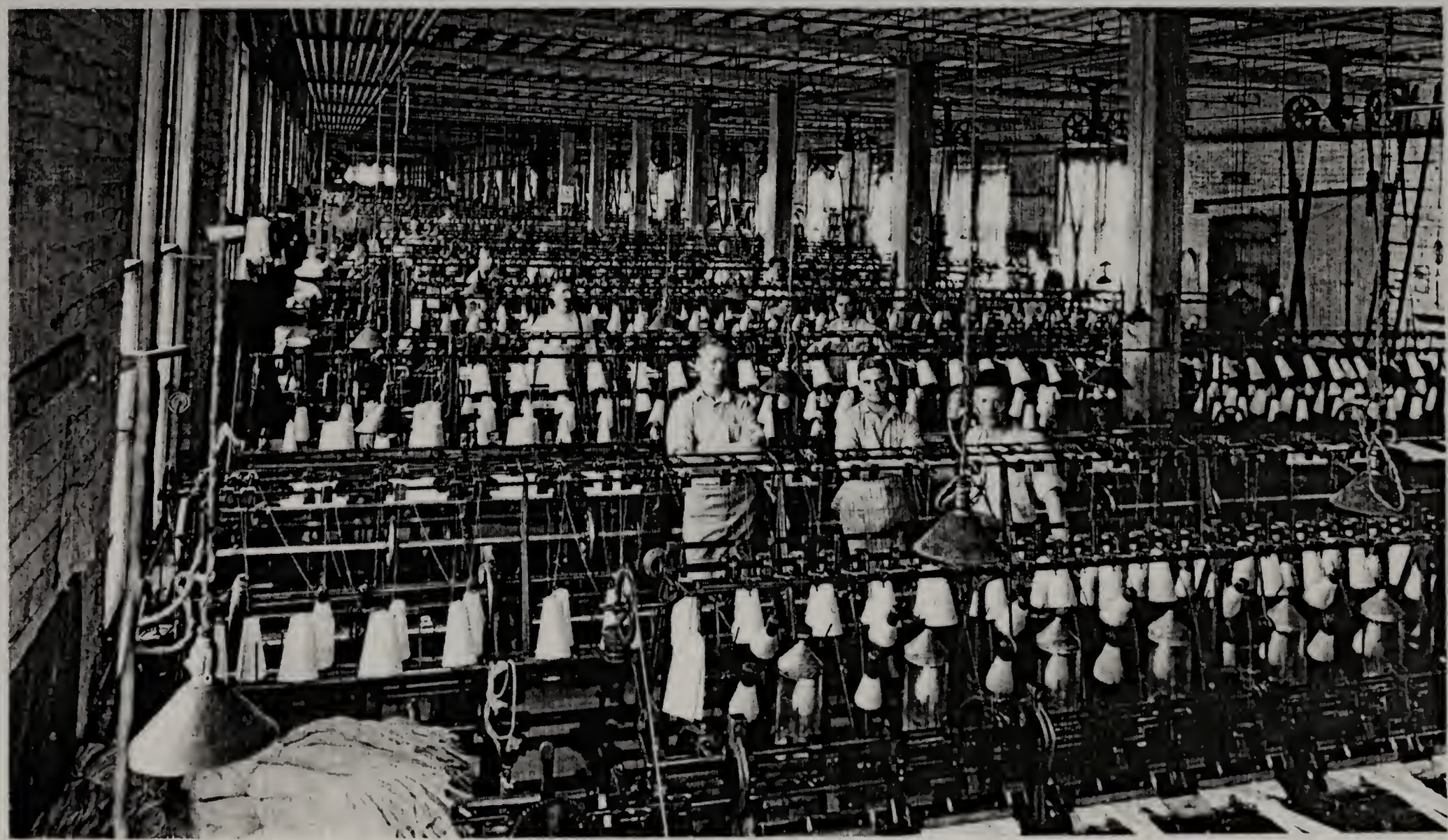
The three-day celebration of the twenty-fifth year of the mill, the Silver Anniversary, in 1916, was a high spot in its history as well as in the life of the founder. There was a glad round of programs and festivities in which he received the well-merited plaudits of many distinguished guests, including prominent customers and other leading manufacturers. Most touching of all perhaps were the generous tributes from his 2,500 employees—his fellow Wayne Knits.

On the employees' night the Knitters' Union presented

Mr. Thieme with a beautiful silver loving cup, engraved on the one side with a picture of the rented store building where the factory began and a picture of the immense plant in 1916. On the opposite side was a picture of Mr. Thieme and the wording, "Presented to Theodore F. Thieme by the Knitters' Union on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the establishment of the Wayne Knitting Mills."

In the course of this anniversary celebration, many Fort Wayne citizens visited the plant and saw the great array of intricate machinery, making hosiery for millions of Americans. What thoughts must have passed through the minds of those among them who had seen the first few machines in the little rented uptown storeroom operated by a handful of bewildered immigrants, led by a determined young dreamer, a quarter of a century before! As for the dreamer, it is enough to say—he had made his dream come true.

Board of Directors of Wayne Knitting Mills. Dinner Picture of 1906. Left to right: Henry J. Miller, Edward Helmcke, Louis Fox, Wm. A. Spies, S. M. Foster, Theo. F. Thieme, Wm. Mossman, Wm. H. Dreier, Fred J. Thieme, John C. Marin.



Factory Knitting Room No. 3 in 1914.

Factory Looping Room No. 1 in 1914.

Chapter VII

PROFIT SHARING AND WELFARE

Of many cardinal features that signalized the building and operation of the Wayne Knitting Mills by Theodore Thieme, there was probably none more outstanding than the fair fame this industry enjoyed, among American industries in his day, because of its progressive program of profit sharing and welfare promotion.

That program was in its way a natural by-product of Mr. Thieme's energy and vision in the founding and the successful conduct of the new industry. It was to provide the greatest possible incentive to efficiency and co-operation on the part of his most responsible associates. Profit sharing flowered out into a wide range of progressive welfare activities that expressed handsomely the humanitarian policy of the management, in correlation with the co-operative spirit of all employees to the mutual welfare of all.

As noted in the preceding chapter, the year 1904 marked the beginning of a new and vastly brighter era for the mills. By a close coincidence, it was also the beginning of a comprehensive profit sharing policy that was initiated solely upon the urgent insistence of Mr. Thieme. Significantly enough, he presented the plan very frankly as at least in part a proper means of rewarding him in proportion to his almost immeasurable service as founder and manager. He had fully in mind from the beginning a lofty and unselfish program of general profit sharing, that would operate directly to the mutual advantage of his associates; but it could only begin with him. It had to depend upon him just as the development of the mills depended upon

him. It was to be the first of all his own long delayed reward—the postponed incentive that had stimulated him from the very beginning to establish the industry and lead it to success.

Summing all this up long afterward, Mr. Thieme said: "My reasoning on the situation confronting me then was about like this":

> This business should earn large profits—more than necessary to pay good salaries, good wages, and good dividends. At present all profits over these requirements go to stockholders. That means that I, the organization, all employees—all of us who created and made this profit—are getting only a living wage from it by working for a salary; while stockholders whose only contribution has been a money investment amply guaranteed, not only receive a good profit dividend, but also all surplus earnings.

This was the way he went about it. He presented the whole situation frankly and clearly at the annual meeting of the board of directors in 1904 in a remarkable communication in writing. That communication and the results that ultimately came from it are so vital in the story of his life that, intimate as it is, some self-explanatory parts must be included in this biography. It began:

> Once a year for the past ten years I have been compelled to wrestle with my fellow members of the board of directors on my salary question. These encounters have been without exception the most painful experiences, and have occasioned me more humiliation and tested my loyalty to the board, more than all else. It is now ten years since we organized, and NOT ONCE have my services been recognized by a voluntary increase of salary.

He was careful to draw a clear distinction between his relation to the other directors as a fellow member of the board and his relation as their employee.

> In all matters pertaining to the Wayne Knitting Mills, the board has always been loyal to me, and without their support, both financial and moral, I could not have accomplished what has been accomplished. On the other hand, I have always dealt honestly and fairly with them and have worked day and night to merit the confidence placed in me,

and to make successful the plans adopted by them from time to time. My complaint is not of this, but in their treatment of me as their employee. The saying, that a man should be worthy of his hire, was never practiced in my case.

Then after a simple statement of his own uncompensated vision and effort, by virtue of which the industry was brought from Europe and established in Fort Wayne, the manuscript continues:

. . . A company was organized and I received my first shock when I soon discovered that my position as manager was looked upon by certain members of the board only as that of an ordinary employee, and my services, as such, were estimated to be worth $1500.00 a year.

After mentioning modestly his business record and his sacrifice in launching this new industry, he added:

Considering all of the above conditions, a $1500.00 salary offered was surely out of place. I accepted the offer, however, for the first year in order to further show my confidence, but was it right?

Here he reviews some history of the first two years which becomes more and more personal as he proceeds to the following incident:

The third year, at our meeting in the director's room of the Old National Bank building, after a prolonged wrangle, my salary was fixed for that year at $1500.00 and accepted by me after a proposition was made, that if the year proved successful, the board would not hesitate to recognize my services by paying a bonus of $1000.00 to $2000.00, which proposition received the sanction of all the members. The year showed a very satisfactory profit and everything looked very bright, especially to me in expectation of receiving the money I actually needed. Not a dollar was I allowed, and the whole agreement was repudiated. During this year I brought about the purchase of the Dover plant, securing machinery for $6000.00 which cost, new, over $30,000.00 and which represents today the productive power as compared to our modern machines of fully $20,000.00. Here was an opportunity and a plain duty by the board to acknowledge this deal handsomely, but history must say they did not recognize it with one dollar.

Here the manuscript becomes yet more intimately personal.

My salary was raised to $1800.00 for the fourth year. At the end of this year, with a good showing again, I pleaded again for an advance which was refused at first, but finally a committee of two was appointed to arrange the matter with me. After an evening's struggle with this committee, they finally consented to fix my salary at $2100.00.

The sixth year I used strong pressure and was paid $2500.00. When I succeeded in interesting New York capital and enlarging the business to double its proportion, I insisted on a per cent of the earnings, but only when I absolutely refused to go ahead and had nearly compromised the whole affair, did the board consent.

The manuscript here sets out explicitly the flourishing condition of the mills, having $500,000 capital, employing 700 people with twelve salesmen on the road, two of them earning $5000 each, and a similar array of unanswerable statistics. He set out his own exact financial status, showing that although he had lived most economically and had not speculated at all, he was very little beyond where he had been when he sold out his drug business fourteen years before to attempt larger things.

Again, my whole time has been in these years, and is today, devoted to the Knitting Mills. I have abstained from all outside matters and propose always to do the same. My work has not been from sunrise to sundown only, but in order to make you money, the factory has been running at nights, and at least three nights a week are devoted by me to factory work. While my ambitions as to the business have been fully realized, I also know that the expectations of the stockholders have been more than realized; but in view of above mentioned conditions, can you imagine for one moment that my personal expectations have been gratified?

It was an earnest protest against what he considered unfair and almost scandalous treatment. As he looks back upon it now he sees that treatment as a reflection of the outrageous attitude of money magnates of that day, when capital was supreme. Those who had the money thought they ought to control absolutely. Capital was everything; talent didn't count.

The whole tenor of the communication was expressive of his respectful determination "to exert all my influence to

obtain my just dues." It concluded: "I am prepared and ready to submit this matter for the consideration of our stockholders, if you so decide."

It should be remembered that the Wayne Knitting Mills always had a very large and representative body of stockholders. With Mr. Thieme's plans for an ever greater industry, much more capital would be required, making desirable a large number of stockholders. He opposed any small group holding a majority, and after the year 1900 none developed. He never considered it good policy that he, or any other individual, should hold any considerable share. At that time, he owned $10,000 worth of stock.

This manuscript, written and presented in 1904, is quoted at such length here because it is a most significant bit of source data in the life of Theodore Thieme as well as in the history of the Wayne Knitting Mills. It marked the beginning of a new era in the fortune of Mr. Thieme as well as in the selfish attitude of directors in a small town. Incidentally, it also ushered in a new era for the mills.

As a direct result of this resolute appeal, a profit-sharing plan that he proposed was approved by the board of directors. It provided, in effect, that out of each year's net profit, 10 per cent dividend should first be paid to the stockholders. Then the remainder of the profits was to be divided into two equal funds, one to constitute extra dividends to stockholders in cash, additional stock, or surplus; the other, to be applied to profit-sharing and welfare. The profit sharing covered three distinct classes—officials, heads of departments, and general employees, ranging from 250 to 300 in number, who were not on piece-work. The portion to be applied to welfare was to be used in the development of progressive welfare activities for the promotion of greater efficiency, unity, and good-will among all Wayne Knitters. The welfare plan was conceived for the common benefit of all, individually, and as an industrial group. It was based upon the conception that all had a mutual interest in the success of the business. It was a sincere attempt to

follow the Golden Rule in the application of humanitarian principles to all features of the industry and to every individual in it.

By this allotment, Mr. Thieme as manager, began to receive for the first time what might be termed adequate compensation for his pre-eminent service and responsibility. It is a pleasure to record that with the phenomenal financial success of the business under his direction, he also received, as the profits mounted, what might be termed back pay. In other words, he received such rewards as compensated happily for his immeasurable service, as founder, and for his indispensable genius in the conduct of an industry that was the immediate product of his hitherto unrewarded vision and labor. It is to be remembered that his share was determined as a fixed percentage by written agreement of the directors, which remained steadfast for nineteen years and did not vary in proportion, whether the profits were large or small. If the business had not prospered, his reward for service would have been very little, or nothing at all.

Beginning with that year in 1904 and continuing for sixteen years, the Wayne Knitting Mills enjoyed unparalleled and increasing prosperity, which was shared in due proportion by all Wayne Knits, numbering some 2500 workers. In fact, two "war years" produced enormous profits, so that dividends to stockholders were *extraordinary* and *unheard of*. Profit-sharing distributions were likewise extraordinary —seemingly reckless and, as we shall discover in a later chapter, most unhealthy in some of their consequences. It is to be remembered, however, that a huge war-profit and income tax claimed over half of these large incomes. Hours were shortened, wages were increased, working conditions, and in some cases living conditions were made as nearly perfect as possible, while a well-rounded program of welfare activities was put into effect, bringing satisfaction and benefit to every member of the Wayne Knit community, which actually became one "big happy family." The song of

the stocking made universal harmony, expressing contentment and good will in shop and home.

Thrift culture became general among Wayne Knits. The careful, detailed nature of the work and the systematic method of pay, through close computation of piece-work and profit-sharing, cultivated thrift naturally. It was also accentuated by welfare stimulation of Christmas savings, victory accounts, and saving stamp societies. Home owning became general among the married men. Bonuses became nest eggs and profit shares became substantial investments. A careful individual survey conducted after one unusually large distribution showed that at least 90% went for permanent accumulation. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have found a more thrifty and independent group of self-respecting earners anywhere than in the Wayne Knit Community.

Mr. Theodore Thieme was hailed by all as the good Santa Claus of Wayne Knit. Indeed, he was truly the one responsible for this happy situation.

The progressive Wayne Knit plan attracted a great deal of attention among wide-awake industries throughout the United States and was the subject of many interested inquiries. Mr. Thieme took pleasure in answering all these promptly and fully. For the sake of convenience, he prepared a standardized prospectus for this purpose on June 4, 1919, from which we shall quote some selected extracts. It was entitled "Co-operative Policy of the Wayne Knitting Mill."

Perhaps the most distinctive unit of this co-operative plan was the Textile Industrial Club which he formed in 1904. He explained the formation and work of this co-operative unit, in part, as follows:

In an effort to overcome this condition, I organized the Textile Industrial Club, including in its membership heads of departments, overseers, inspectors, minor officials, and certain special workers. At the same time a regular share of the general profit was set aside, the distribution of which was left with the manager, who uses his best

judgment and experience in allotting the amount set aside for distribution among the members at the end of the year. This profit sharing feature is used as an incentive for producing general results. Regular attendance at the weekly meetings covering a full evening is a requisite of the profit sharing privilege and membership in the club. The manager and other active officials attend these meetings quite frequently, introducing subjects for discussion and action by the club. Otherwise the organization is quite independent, electing its own officers and preparing its own program.

It was at the formal organization meeting of the Textile Club that the profit-sharing plan was launched. As a proper send-off for this important new plan, Mr. Thieme invited a party of thirty-four heads of departments to a banquet on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, 1904, in the Chamber of Commerce Building. In an address introducing the subject, after explaining the purpose and operation of the new plan, he made a formal presentation of the Wayne Knitting Mills Profit Sharing Plan, on behalf of the Board of Directors and himself, to officers, employees and stockholders, and called it the 1905 New Year's Gift.

Thus the plan was launched formally at the same meeting in which the organization of the Textile Industrial Club was made effective.

One of the leading members of the Textile Club, recalling this first meeting for its formation, said recently: "I remember well that when Mr. Thieme explained his idea to us we all felt that we were being invited into something great and good—I might say, something high and holy. It gave us the inspiration to give larger and better service on a high plane of co-operation that we had not understood before." The Textile Club was perhaps the best demonstration of the effectiveness of profit sharing as an incentive to efficiency. Mr. Thieme commented upon this significantly in the report to the Institute of Educational Travel, February 28, 1914, in part as follows:

I consider "profit sharing" the greatest incentive to efficiency, and an invaluable means of obtaining the ultimate of all business results.

Textile Industrial Club in 1916.

Club House Dining Room.

The great danger of profit-sharing plans which are not based upon some actual, visible, workable results is that they become more or less of a fixed habit with employees, and are considered in the nature of an addition to the salary. If the amount in a certain year is reduced, it creates dissatisfaction. If it is increased, there is great joy, but unfortunately it does not furnish the proper stimulus to the profit sharer in the beginning of a new year. In other words, the profit-sharing must be made an individual proposition based on merit. Every individual member must be made to feel conscious of his part in the work; and he will then appreciate the cooperation of other employees, and will not only insist but demand that they perform their share of the work, and thus contribute to obtain the desired results.

The all-important fact about the system of profit sharing initiated by Mr. Thieme was that it worked. It worked as he intended. It proved to be both incentive and reward. It brought efficiency and satisfaction. He was its author and administrator. At first, he listed the profit-sharing awards and submitted them to the board of directors for their approval. But after three or four years, he handled them entirely without submitting lists to the directors. Everything depended upon his familiarity and fairness. He had to keep in close touch with every member, so as to know what they were doing all the time so that he might be able to reward them with discrimination. He attended nearly all meetings of the Textile Club and took an active part in discussions and programs.

In distributing smaller amounts to some 300 miscellaneous employees who were not in the Textile Club, he used great consideration and kindness. One of the experienced foreladies, who has long since retired from the mills, remembers an incident in which she had a very pleasant part. After a thorough distribution had been made, Mr. Thieme called her to his office and asked if she could suggest any employee, or perhaps two or three, no matter how humble, whom she might consider worthy of special recognition. Half humorously, she suggested the dry cleaning department, which consisted of about a dozen somewhat

elderly women doing rather common work, for which, however, they were well paid. He jumped at the suggestion and made each of the "dear old girls" happy with a present of twenty-five dollars.

Of course, the great army of piece workers received bonuses, profit shares in wage increases, and merited premiums.

The general welfare program, which was maintained by a fixed proportion of the profit-sharing fund, was singularly adapted to unique conditions which it helped to create. It grew and developed naturally out of Mr. Thieme's humanitarian vision for a greater and more prosperous institution sustained by loyal, prosperous, and happy working men and women. It is possible that there were some progressive industries that went farther a quarter of a century ago along some special lines of welfare work than the Wayne Knitting Mills; but it may well be doubted if any other American industry offered such a well-balanced round of benefits and activities.

The main scope of the program can perhaps be indicated best by the following general outline of Wayne Knitting Mills Welfare activities.

I. EDUCATION
- 1. Part-time School
- 2. University Extension Classes
- 3. Special Vocational Classes
- 4. Correspondence Courses
- 5. Gymnasium Classes
- 6. Music Courses
- 7. Elementary English for Foreigners
- 8. Library and Reading Facilities

II. RECREATION
- 1. Athletic Association
  - (a) Wayne Knit Teams in Industrial Leagues: Baseball, Football, Basket Ball, Bowling
  - (b) All Wayne Leagues in Volley Ball and Horseshoe
  - (c) Special Athletic Exhibitions
- 2. Sailor Girls

3. Gymnits (Also Educational)
4. Drum Corps (Musical)
5. Boy Scouts (Also Educational)
6. Knitingals (Musical)
7. Department Frolics
8. Saxonia Singing Society

III. PROTECTIVE

1. Benefit Society
2. Group Insurance
3. Workmen's Compensation
4. Safety First Committee
5. Volunteer Fire Department

IV. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

1. Community Center
2. Lyceum and Entertainment Courses
3. Picnics and Field Days
4. Spring Carnival
5. Athletic Carnival and Dance

V. PUBLICITY

1. Ravlings and Ravelettes
2. Special Publications, like **Hubbard's Journey to Wayne Knit**
3. Reflections in Regular Industrial and Community News

VI. SPECIAL RELIEF

1. Health Service in Dispensary and Homes
2. Welfare Contributions (Charity)
3. Foreign Relief Drives

VII. SERVICE AWARDS

1. Old Age Pensions
2. Pioneer Club
3. Textile Club
4. Wayne Club
5. Matchless Club
6. Bonus and Profit Sharing Allotments

VIII. THRIFT CULTURE

1. Xmas Savings
2. War Saving Stamp Societies
3. Victory Accounts

IX. ADVISORY AND PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

1. Advice and Aid in Investments
2. Legal Counsel and Assistance

X. CLUB HOUSE

1. Dining and Lunch Room
2. Dormitory
3. General Social Center

The club house which was built in 1910 with profit-sharing funds was perhaps the most outstanding material exhibit of the welfare program. Its grand public opening was reported in the *Journal Gazette* December 17, 1910, in part as follows:

> The interest manifested in Wayne Knitting Mills and especially the mills' club house and dormitory, the recent addition to the mills, was evidenced last night when between 12,000 and 15,000 people were received as guests of the employees and management at the reception and open house. The unexpected rush began early in the evening and at 6:30 o'clock the building was filled to capacity and not until 10 o'clock did the crowd thin to a point where it could be properly handled.

There was a lively program of music, speeches, and other entertainment, including the conducting of visitors to all departments of the mills by the aid of thirty-five guides.

In his profit-sharing and welfare circular, Mr. Thieme summed up the uses of the club house, as follows:

> The club house has developed into a social and community center for all our people. The dining room is patronized daily by from 500 to 1000 people, meals and lunches being served for less money than it costs the people at home. The bowling alleys and pool tables are well patronized, and the dance halls in winter time are always in demand. Wedding anniversaries and many birthdays of our employees are observed in our spacious rooms, with the dining room facilities. The dormitory for out-of-town girls is an added feature of the club house; and in order to care properly for these out-of-town girls, it is possible to maintain a regular hotel organization which brings life and cheer into the place at all hours. Our club house has built a place for itself in the Wayne Knitting Mills organization and is as necessary as is a

living room in a home or a lobby in a hotel. A certain amount of community spirit and social life should be encouraged in the factory, in the same way as it is encouraged in the university and the college. The student's loyalty to his college is often due more to the social and fraternal spirit than to the learning. So a loyal and cooperative spirit in a factory will not nearly so quickly be developed through the daily grind of work, as through the social and fraternal features. The profit sharing and the club house features go hand in hand together in this organization, and both are proving equally good investments.

The Gymnit Club, organized in 1915, sponsored by the Y. W. C. A., has for a quarter of a century reflected credit upon the welfare policy of Mr. Thieme. On the occasion of the celebration of their silver anniversary, March 28, 1940, the Gymnits sent to him in his Los Angeles winter home a gracious greeting and invitation, to which he responded characteristically in part as follows:

The invitation from Gymnit Club, through yourself as secretary, was a most happy surprise. And so the old "Gymnits" will be twenty-five years old Thursday, March 28, and the event is to be celebrated with a Silver Jubilee Banquet! How nice it was for the members to think of me with an invitation to be present! Needless to say, I am quite unhappy that it will be impossible for me to be in Fort Wayne at that time; but I promise to lift my glass in a toast to one of the most creditable organizations developed during my management of the Wayne Knitting Mills.

Twenty-five years is a long time, and I am wondering how many are left in the organization today who were there at the start. If you have a list of the members, especially the early members, I would appreciate such a list in order to be carried back to a period in my life which I always think of as the happiest, the busiest, and the most productive. It is certainly a great satisfaction to me to know that the great industry that I established is still operating and that among the organizations active in the development of this business, the Gymnits are still functioning.

He always enjoyed the activities and parties of the Gymnits. In fact, he has always made himself a part of all Wayne Knit social activities both at the club house and at his own home, where he frequently entertained the various

mill groups. He took his luncheon usually at the club house and often conducted or attended dinners there. The club house accommodated banquets of all kinds, ranging from 6 to 812 plates. All Wayne Knits enjoyed the club house. It offered something for all. In the community center programs, there were many different games and activities, such as stride ball and tugs of war that called for large teams. There were night programs, in which as many as a thousand different members took some active part.

Mighty rope pulling contests between the strong men of the knitting, boarding and dye house departments, as well as speedy stride ball races between loopers and sewers, "fats" and "thins", "overalls" and "bloomers", are still remembered with gusto by scores of Wayne Knits, who participated in them during those halcyon days of the mill's most expansive welfare activities. Mr. Thieme encouraged these wholesome pastimes and found much relish in them. He was always "right there" on the side lines and occasionally removed his coat and vest to take a hand. He was ever a lover of simple sports.

Perhaps his closest personal association was with the Pioneer Club, made up of employees who had been with the mills twenty years or more. It was formed in 1912 and consisted almost entirely of pioneer knitters whom he brought over from Saxony to start the industry. It reached the total number of 135 members in 1923. They always considered him as one of themselves. Their picnics and parties were held frequently on the spacious grounds of his country home.

The Saxonia Singing Society, consisting of good male singers chosen from among those knitters who came direct from Saxony, or their sons, maintained an active organization for the singing of choice songs of the Fatherland. They delighted festive Wayne Knit occasions of every kind with their wonderful choruses.

Ravlings, the official house organ of the mills, was published at intermittent periods, usually by the month. It

ranged in size from four to twenty-four pages. Edited by the welfare department, with everything in it furnished by Wayne Knits, it was truly the voice of the Wayne Knit community. With its columns open to all, it contained the Wayne Knit news—personal, departmental and general. Every issue reflected the literary and artistic talent in prose, poetry, and cartoons, as well as the humor and the wide range of human interest that was to be found among the 2500 men and women who constituted that compact community. There were issues in which hundreds in the mills received some personal mention.

Mr. Thieme contributed items of special interest to every issue. For example, in March, 1918, he offered on the outside front cover the following personal comment, entitled "Our Welfare":

> I regard our common welfare, as members of the Wayne Knit organization, as almost identical with the welfare of a family, or in a yet larger sense, the welfare of the members of a community or state.
>
> In a socialized state and in a socialized family, certain community functions necessary to the well-being and prosperity of all the members, as well as to the maintenance of harmony and good will, must be promoted through organization. This is true of modern industrial institutions.
>
> We have no more important function today in the Wayne Knitting Mills, in my opinion, than the development of our welfare work. This we are doing in part through certain aids such as old age pensions, special assistance to sick and needy, sick and accident insurance, group insurance and health department, which do much to alleviate misfortune.
>
> Important as these are, they are secondary in my judgment to our more constructive welfare work through profit sharing, club house privileges, community center, education, social culture and recreation which recognize and promote efficiency, good fortune, good feeling, community well-being and satisfaction, individual success, and leadership. It is this kind of welfare work that must be vastly increased through manufacturing institutions in the immediate future.

Thus we see the comprehensive profit-sharing and welfare program of which he was the author fully integrated

with every interest of the industry he had founded. It revolved around him. He was identified with every feature of it, both personally and officially.

He maintained also the same kind of wholesome morale in his relations with directors and stockholders, and in their relations with each other and the entire Wayne Knit organization. His annual inventory dinners for directors and special guests were the last word as exhibits of sumptuous good feeling.

In fact, Mr. Thieme made of each of these inventory dinners a talisman of Wayne Knit harmony and progress. In time these occasions acquired a background with much the same sentiments and significance as surrounded the harvest festivals of old. They became an annual event and were looked forward to by all who were privileged to attend.

These dinners were held each year for nearly thirty years on the day of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. They were usually attended by a number of special guests, often from a distance. At times they developed into special feature events, such for instance, as the "California Dinner of 1920," when the establishment of the California Branch of Thieme Bros. Company was under consideration. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and some good California customers sent glad greetings in the form of choice California fruits and other specialties.

During the first World War, before the entry of the United States, one of the Inventory Dinners was a very unique "Peace Dinner," which was held at the Country Club and was largely attended. There was a select small orchestra, a soprano soloist, and a speaker of national repute, who had just returned from a tour of European battle fields. After each course, a toast to one of the combatants was drunk in its own national wine or most distinctive beverage, while its national hymn was rendered by the orchestra and sung by the soloist. The menu speaks for itself.

Annual Inventory Dinner

To the Board of Directors, Officers and Guests

OF

Wayne Knitting Mills

AND

Thieme Brothers Company

BY

Theodore F. Thieme

President

Let Us Have Peace

Caviar Toasties
Chicken Broth with Spring Vegetables
Ripe and Green Olives
Radishes

Soft Shell Crabs, Tartar Sauce

Roast Stuffed Squab, Demi Glace
New Potatoes Parsley Sauce
Fresh Peas Light Rolls

Asparagus, 1000 Island Dressing
Cheese Sticks

Turkish Figs Strawberry Ice Cream
U. S. Cigars
Turkish Cigarettes
Dry Champagne

EMIL KELLER, Caterer
F. Y. GROSS, Master of Ceremonies

Toast Wines

Cocktail	(United States)
Pontet-Canet	(France)
Tokaji	(Hungary)
Ginger Ale	(England)
Rüdesheimer	(Germany)
Chianti	(Italy)
Vöslauer Goldeck	(Austria)
Grape Juice	(Belgium)
Mountain Dew	(Servia)
Allash	(Russia)
Bazaar Favorité	(Turkey)
Satsuma Clan	(Japan)

In the year of the world war, 1915

The total result of all this was a united and harmonious industry. The situation was fittingly expressed by the pen of the master essayist, Elbert Hubbard. After an enjoyable visit to the Wayne Knitting Mills, he penned one of his inimitable gems, "A Little Journey to Wayne Knit," in which he said:

The Wayne Knit people cooperate. They stick together and pull together. The fidelity and loyalty of the workers has been tested and tried.

Here is not only the home of full-fashioned hosiery but also the home of democracy.

Behind the hum of industry is a pulsating humanism. The air is surcharged with helpfulness and good will.

Not only do they knit hose at the Wayne Knitting Mills, but here Time's shuttle plies over the web and woof of friendship, and the fabric is life. The employers and employees are all just one big family.

The Pioneer Club—Employees with Company twenty or more years. Thieme Gardens in 1920.

Saxonia Singing Society of Wayne Knitting Mills, taken in 1916.

Trustees Benefit Society in 1916

Chapter VIII

TRAVEL

It is axiomatic that reading maketh a full man, writing an exact man, and travel a broad man. Mr. Thieme's experience may be said to exemplify all three of these postulates.

All his life, he has been a selective reader, usually along the lines of his main interests—industry, government, history, biography, and art. Always he has kept fully abreast of the times, both in domestic and world affairs, through the best newspapers and magazines. He is still stocking his book-shelves with outstanding modern books, covering world problems. He continues to study deeply the philosophy of international developments. Certainly, reading has given him a full mind.

He has always been an exact writer; but never for the sake of writing. His writing has always been purposeful in connection with immediate interests. He has been a prolific correspondent. His letters through the years have been numerous and sometimes voluminous. Always they have been noted for clearness and conciseness and for excellence of form. He has had the best of secretarial facilities at all times. His volumes of bulletins for the mills are models of brevity and business diction. His speeches have been carefully written, and his numerous magazine articles and published pamphlets are examples of clear thought and careful word selection. Certainly, his writings have shown him to be an exact man.

More distinctive, however, than either reading or writing has been his breadth of experience in travel. It may seem an extreme statement, but it is really true, that travel

has been as vital and natural in his life as the simpler factors of reading and writing and has had more significance than either of them in his career. He has traveled constantly and regularly both for the sake of travel and for business.

It has been shown already that from early youth he cherished the urge of wanderlust. Notwithstanding his compelling business interests all through his life, he has nurtured this impulse to the very last. And he has made it serve his business and other interests, while gratifying an inherent passion for travel for the sake of travel—seeing distant places, exploring strange realms, and making new contacts.

Even a simple chronicle of his foreign travels, with brief comments of his own from his diaries and log books or from memory, would make a large volume. It would be a volume full of instruction concerning continental points of interest in nearly all parts of the civilized world. It would also be rich with human interest, contributed by the ready reflections of his fertile mind out of innumerable direct contacts. The limitations of space permit only a summary sketch of his main travels, together with special mention of some selected incidents and observations, including passing mention of his peregrinations throughout the United States, which may perhaps serve to show the scope of his wanderings and indicate something of their significance.

Notice has already been taken of his trip to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876 and of his "golden year abroad" in 1878. A trip to the New Orleans Exposition in 1885 was followed by an excursion to Havana, Cuba, in 1886 during the carnival season, with a friend, Mr. E. C. Thrall.

Cuba was then under Spanish government. The two young American travelers experienced a vivid example of the unblushing corruption that was flourishing in Havana, which Mr. Thieme recorded as follows:

Our first day there, Thrall had his pocketbook stolen. Making inquiry at the hotel how to proceed to recover it, he was referred to the porter of another hotel, who, in turn, referred us to a gentleman (or highwayman) evidently the boss of the gang, to be found in a nearby small cigar shop. This man assured us that the pocketbook was safe and would be returned, minus the cash, but with all papers, including a return ticket, on payment of ———— dollars.

My friend thought he would be smart, and assured the gentleman he would get the money and return to make the necessary settlement, when the gentleman said "That's all right, my boy, just come with me." He took him into the hotel, called for the porter, and with the porter they proceeded around the corner into an office where there were several police officers.

These officers assured Thrall that it would be all right for him to pay the money and that he would receive the pocketbook within an hour. They warned him against trying to enlist the aid of the police, as he was talking to the police right then. He paid the money, and in an hour had his pocketbook, just as agreed. We were told that this was a regular system, the loot being split half a dozen ways. . . .

First-hand instruction in the sharp school of experience for travelers!

It was on this trip, while in Florida, that Mr. Thieme first met Miss Bessie Loring of Boston, who was some eight years later to become Mrs. Thieme.

After trips to Canada and various parts of the United States in succeeding years, Mr. Thieme made in 1890 his second pilgrimage to Europe, this time in quest of the Golden Fleece. He returned to Europe in 1891 on a business trip and in 1893 made frequent visits to the Chicago World's Fair. But in the period 1894 to 1901, the work of getting the new industry on its feet kept him at home.

In 1901, after a visit to the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, his first trip with Mrs. Thieme and his little son Wayne, then three years old, Mr. Thieme made a business trip to Europe.

"Meet me in St. Louis, Louis" might have been the theme song of Mr. Thieme's peregrinations for the greater part of the year 1904. Shuttling by train or more arduously by horseless carriage over morass-like roads, Mr. Thieme spent

considerable time commuting back and forth from Fort Wayne to St. Louis. It was at the St. Louis Universal Exposition that his tremendously successful exhibit of the American manufacture of full-fashioned hosiery presaged the first great period of rapid expansion for the Wayne Knitting Mills.

The latest and largest knitting machine was installed. Black lace stockings were made on this machine, a demonstration that proved to be a great drawing card. Its operation was entrusted to Robert Claussner, one of his most skilled knitters, who later organized a hosiery mill in the south, and as president and manager, made it one of the largest and most successful plants in the country. His father was one of the original crew of skilled knitters brought over by Mr. Thieme from Germany.

In 1906, Mr. Thieme traveled again to Europe with two of the firm's leading salesmen, T. P. Matthews and N. A. Cole. A lengthy stay at Chemnitz, the world hosiery center at that time, was of great educational value to these two hosiery salesmen.

In addition to his usual business pursuits in Chemnitz, Mr. Thieme and his party toured England, France, Switzerland, and Germany.

An incident which enlivened this trip was a day's entertainment at the country home of one of the large Chemnitz manufacturers, which proved impressively the importance and efficiency of the German housekeeper (hausfrau). Mr. Thieme commented upon this characteristically, as follows:

> All agreed that such resourcefulness and perfection of service were undreamed of. Beginning in the morning, we had a hearty breakfast, followed by a second "cold breakfast" about 11 o'clock; dinner around 1 o'clock; coffee lunch at 4 o'clock; supper at 7; late supper at 10—and each meal served with an entirely distinct service of china and silverware and accompanied by the proper and accepted drinks before, during, and after the meal. One hour, from three to four, was passed in quiet and seclusion for welcome relaxation and complete rest. Re-

turning to the city late, we were so stimulated and happy over the day's experience that it was early morning before we rested sufficiently to go to sleep.

A trip from New York to South America, Central America, and the West Indies in 1907 was marked by the celebration of his fiftieth birthday, February 7, on board ship. His fellow voyagers converted Mr. Thieme's champagne birthday dinner into a cheerful pandemonium with an armload of noise-and-fun-making curiosities procured on a shore trip the day before.

"I had been feeling sad and worried at entering the first year of old age," recounted Mr. Thieme, "but this exuberant celebration brought sufficient cheer and happiness to make me forget."

Noteworthy sights on this tour included the city of Kingston, Jamaica Island which was just recovering from a terrific earthquake that had occurred two weeks before.

In July of 1908, Mr. Thieme made the first of a series of about ten fishing trips with a group of friends to various fishing resorts in Minnesota and Canada. These were great events, with interest centering on competition for the biggest muskellunge caught, and a subsequent fish dinner given by the winner, after the return home. On one trip, Mr. Thieme set the local season's record for the largest catch of this species of northern pike. His trophy was mounted and adorned his office at the mills for many years.

The more or less "regular" personnel of the party included such well-known Fort Wayne men as Charles Wilding, Judge William Vesey, Charles Worden, S. F. Bowser, C. J. Dunkelberg, William Shambaugh, Dr. Viberg, Larry Randall, Olaf Guldlin, and Wm. Rastetter. All of these jolly fishermen have passed away, excepting Mr. Thieme and Mr. Randall.

Tours in various parts of the United States and in Mexico in the years of 1908 and 1909 were followed in 1910 by a trip to Europe with the family, in a small "de luxe" party organized to tour Norway, Sweden and Germany. This

trip was especially significant because it was the genesis of Mr. Thieme's intensive study of municipal government and civic improvement, inspired by his acute observation of the progress made in leading cities in these countries.

He was impressed also by the Swedish liquor system, the so-called "Gothenberg plan," whereby the government rented out local liquor concessions for a city or district, limiting the profits and exercising strict control, thereby curbing any tendencies toward excess liquor habits among the Swedish people.

Mr. Thieme's powers of discriminating observation are strikingly illustrated by his disjoined penciled notes in a voluminous "Log Book" wherein he kept a running commentary on the trip's incidents and observations. The following excerpts are typical of his copious comments:

Makeup of our party: six males, ten females (several widows). Lunch at Rathskeller, Bremen. I assumed ordering after observing difficulty of so many women and in a hurry; finest meal, everybody delighted. I ordered the celebrated Liebfraumilch Rhine wine. A preacher and several ladies were "drys"; after dinner all were "wets".

Kopenhagen, 600,000, modern city. Observation: Public conveniences in prominent locations and in parks, in rooms completely encased in white tile, with public telephone, etc. Carlines numbered. No drunkenness, have Gothenburg system. Many bicycles used, as both men and women use them; counted 21 per minute passing for 5 minutes at 6:30 P.M. Long legged men and women . . . women have poor taste in dress; stockings and shoes slouchy, legs sag into feet. Poor business for Wayne Knit Hosiery . . . Driving through city discouraged by our women gossiping, etc., instead of looking at sights.

Gothenburg, 135,000, wonderfully clean, well-built and well-located city. Fine parks, big crowd, orderly, cosmopolitan . . . Fine embankments, promenade or drive along front. Picture gallery and museum with best paintings, modern artists . . . Home of Gothenburg liquor system. Gothenburg owns street car system, water, gas and lighting. Water is free. Street car service nearly so. In Sweden one town only is dry; and there, the people go aboard ships and boats in the harbor and drink to excess. Considered a failure. Waiting stations sell small bottles of liquor with fancy labels and French names; bought one, and on train, when thirsty, found it was perfume. . . .

Fishing Group at Northern Minnesota Lakes. Left to right: Chas. Worden, Chas. Dunkelberg, S. F. Bowser, two guides. Chas. Wilding, Theo. F. Thieme, W. H. Shambaugh.

On wagon trip (in Norway) many steep hills; drivers always walk on inclines, and on very steep hills passengers must walk. Some of our ladies objected. I showed them the danger if cart should go backward and they fell over each other to get out. Driver thanked me . . . Women great worry to conductor, asked foolish questions, don't understand things and get balky. Had attic room in hotel in Odde. Joked about DeLuxe trip. At Stahlheim, another party of American women on steamer in restaurant grabbed everything in sight, chairs, benches, at table take 2 or 3 portions, and noisy; men outclassed . . . At Leon, Wayne and I fished, herring bait, but no sport, very hot.

At Trondjeim our widows had a controversy with a Swedish gentleman, he said American men work too hard, etc., but said our widows were fine. I said, we men must work hard to make such fine widows. We learned Scandinavians are happy and contented, but not enough room for all; so those leave and emigrate who are crowded out. Keeps country healthy by getting rid of surplus and keeps out beggars; good thing if it could be done in other countries.

Stockholm, finest spot in Europe, we thought. Many open places, parks with statues. No telephone or electric wires above ground. Water fronts all walled up with ornamental stone.

Berlin railroad stations occupy much space. We should assist Pennsylvania R.R. to acquire land for a large station and suitable approach.

The "Log Book" concludes with this observation:

Great development going on in direction of artistic beautifying of cities. Fort Wayne and other American cities must not stay behind.

In 1911, Mr. Thieme travelled with the family to England for King George's coronation and then joined at Brussels a large party arranged by the Boston Chamber of Commerce to tour the principal cities in continental Europe. This tour had as its purpose to invite European Chambers of Commerce to attend the International Chambers of Commerce meeting in Boston the following year.

Special attention was given to facilitate study of industrial, municipal, cultural and other national enterprises by the scientists, economists, and sociologists who were included in the party. The party actually was made up of investigators—including Mr. Thieme, who joined it with the direct

purpose of studying city government and the methods used in various European cities, especially their success with public ownership of public utilities. Other investigators made research in such humanitarian and other social enterprises as old age pensions and social security.

Such leading sociologists and economists as John H. Fahy of Boston, Frederick Howe of Ohio, Mayor Steed of Denver, Colorado, and Lincoln Steffens, were members of the party. Dr. Howe upon his return wrote his widely read book, "Government of European Cities," giving his observations of city governments in Europe. With this select company of educators, writers, politicians, scientists, and students, Mr. Thieme found rare opportunity to broaden his first-hand study of municipal management.

Following a trip to the Panama Exposition in San Diego in 1915, Mr. Thieme went to the Pacific Coast for two months of relaxation under the doctor's orders. It was his first illness—a nervous breakdown, caused by overwork and over-activity in public affairs. He was at that time an active member of twenty-two different civic organizations. During this rest he enjoyed some personal visits with large western customers. The prescription worked; a complete cure was effected.

In 1916 he travelled with a nephew, Ralph Thieme, on a three months' escorted tour of Central and South America. During this trip advantage was taken to investigate the possibility of obtaining dyestuffs, of which the knitting industry was drastically in need at that time because of war restrictions. The dye situation at Wayne Knitting Mills was on the ragged edge, and Mr. Thieme had heard of the availability of dyestuffs in South America. In the Indian country, he found plenty of dyestuffs used by the Indians to color their blankets and robes; but they proved to be wool dyes, not suitable for cotton or silk.

Because of the threat of raiders and other war scares, the trip turned out to be quite other than a refreshing diversion; in fact, Mr. Thieme considers it the most strenu-

ous trip of his life but it was a highly educational trip. Here is a typical excerpt from his written comments.

Rio de Janeiro, without exaggeration, has a most romantic location on the ocean, at the foot of mountains. Buenos Aires, Argentina, impressed me as typical of the best and latest construction of European cities, with wide boulevards, modern store fronts, public parks and flowers, having the reputation of one of the show cities of the world. Other spots of unusual attraction included Lake Titicaca and La Paz, Bolivia, the city built within a crater.

He made the following notation of one of the oddest experiences of his traveling career:

At Cuzco, Peru, once the capital of the great Indian empire, now a city characterized mostly by mules and mud, elevation 11,000 feet, the party stopped at the Hotel Pullman, owned and operated by a very wealthy politician. This politico knew nothing about the hotel business, but conducted it with the utmost lavishness, as reflected even in the furnishings. He announced that in honor of our party he would give a suitable banquet, and it was the most novel ever attended by any member of our party. Before the first meat course, we had already had pressed upon us half a dozen appetizers and soups, and innumerable drinks. The first meat course was the first of a series of exactly 10 meat courses. We did not know then, and do not know now, the exact delicacies which embellished them. After the third or fourth course, the party arose from the table after each successive course and chased each other around in order to settle down the dinner so far eaten in order to prepare for the next course.

World War I forced a temporary curtailment in Mr. Thieme's travels, but in 1920 he and his son Wayne made a "Tour of the Battlefields" in France and Belgium, partly as a graduation gift for Wayne, just completing his course at Harvard, and partly to resume touch with the Chemnitz machine market.

In 1922, a trip to Europe and the Mediterranean countries with Mrs. Thieme and Wayne included a visit up the Nile to the tomb of King Tutankhamen. Between this trip and another to Europe in 1926 with his brother, John, Mr. Thieme went with Wayne in 1924 to Honolulu where an

amusing incident occurred. Running short of funds for the return trip, Mr. Thieme cabled Thieme Brothers Company for "five hundred." Construing his wire as a request for the popular #500 brand of hosiery, the firm rushed him a sample box of stockings instead of $500. The error had to be rectified by another cable.

Trips to the West Indies and to Europe in 1926 and 1927 were followed in 1929 by a memorable trip with Mrs. Thieme around the world. It was a specially conducted five months' tour of some 300 pilgrims on the good ship "Resolute," starting from New York, January 7, 1929, returning via Honolulu and Los Angeles, then through Panama Canal and the Caribbean Sea back to New York in May.

Mr. Thieme was so much impressed with all the wonders of this trip that he could write a book upon it yet today. The "Resolute" was genuinely a floating home, with all accommodations superbly arranged. There were occasional inland diversions for two days or more with every detail fully articulated—the most perfect synchronization imaginable, including constant touch with all the world through cable accommodations and daily papers. An expert staff—sixteen members of the crew—handled all personnel and entertainment features for the pilgrims—lectures, concerts, games, and dances. Over 100 autos, each reserved for specified passengers, awaited the pilgrims at main ports. Such system and service impressed Mr. Thieme most agreeably.

The tour encompassed Madeira, Spain and Gibraltar, Algeria, French Riviera, Italy, Greece, Holy Land, Egypt, French Somaliland, India, Ceylon, Burma, Sumatra, Java, Malay States, Siam, Borneo, Sulu, the Philippines, Japan, China, Formosa, Hawaii, California, the Panama Canal, Panama Republic, and Cuba.

At the age of seventy-two, Mr. Thieme found the keenest possible enjoyment in this climax of his traveling career and he took the utmost advantage of it—frequently pur-

suing side adventures to the great alarm of some of his solicitous fellow tourists. He climbed the Chinese Walls in rough places without escort. In Jerusalem, he took a late afternoon walk, without guidance, through alleys and narrow passageways to eye the Wailing Wall. Deep in the labyrinth, surrounded by suspicious looking Arabs, two male companions, who had started with him, stopped short. "This is too dangerous," they said. But he went on, returning about dark to his badly worried friends.

Typical of his strong urge of inquisitiveness is this recorded incident:

> In a Chinese city, riding in rickshaws over streets that did not seem any too safe for foreigners, we saw a considerable crowd of men rushing in and out of a large corner building. I stopped to see what the excitement was about; and in spite of the protestations of the others, made my way through the wildly gesticulating crowd into the building and found myself in the stock exchange. When I emerged, I found that one of the party had summoned a policeman to help find me. He did, after I had satisfied my curiosity in witnessing a Chinese stock exchange in operation.

Mr. Thieme's travels were not at an end. In 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, and 1934 he made voyages to Europe accompanied usually by Mrs. Thieme. But in 1935, chiefly because of a serious inconvenience for the traveler, a difficulty in hearing, he desisted from his international rambles after a trip to Cuba, Central America, and Mexico. He was then seventy-eight years old.

Since 1935, the Thiemes have made it their routine to spend eight months on the Pacific Coast, and four months in the summer in Fort Wayne or in domestic travel.

As we pause to survey this remarkable record of travel, we may well ponder the indefatigability of spirit that led him to Europe eighteen times for thirty-six crossings of the Atlantic from 1878 to 1934, not to count innumerable domestic and "side trips" within the Western Hemisphere. Nor were these trips lackadaisical, armchair excursions; for Mr. Thieme's keen energy and curiosity kept him always

on the go, avid to squeeze every new experience for the eye and mind from each fresh scene and day.

We ponder, too, how it could have been possible for Mr. Thieme to absent himself so long and frequently from his growing industry, even though all the earlier trips were made chiefly on company business. Therein lies the secret of his success, "System and Management!" Months in advance of each trip, he conferred individually with each member of his closely knit organization of fifty-five or more department heads, setting forth for each of them exact responsibilities and objectives to be reached during his absence. At designated stops on the itinerary he received reports from each head; and the day after his return, he met with them individually to take accounting of their stewardship. Inevitably, the department heads took special pride in accomplishing the designated duty. While permitting Mr. Thieme to refresh himself from the incessant strain of managing a large industry, this system at the same time provided the finest possible training for the subexecutives. Thus, his travel integrated perfectly with his business and kept him physically fit and mentally alert for plunging again into the whirl of his many business cares.

Whether traveling on train or boat, Mr. Thieme always carried a note-book for entering matters relating to his business or his civic activities, as they occurred to him. His more important business plans and matters pertaining to factory operation were conceived and recorded there. Many of his speeches and booklets on "City Government" and "State Constitutions" were written out on trains and steamers.

Aside from a host of sparkling memories over sixty years, what tangible results did this almost fabulous peregrination produce? Did this modern Ulysses come home empty-handed otherwise? Let Fort Wayne proudly give the answer. A mighty new industry which has supplied employment to thousands and through its trade-mark has made the world conscious of the Hoosier metropolis; a vigorous awakening

to the need for civic reform and business morality in local government; many lasting contributions to the city's store of artistic treasures and municipal beauty; in short, a renaissance and enrichment of civic pride, prosperity, and culture whose influence still persists and will persist to the common good for generations to come—these constitute the treasures which the traveler brought home from his travels.

Inasmuch as it has been made apparent in this chapter that the joy of travel has been a main source of Mr. Thieme's intimate delight throughout his days, it is fitting to conclude with the true treasure-trove of his pilgrimage through life. It has been mentioned that on one of his early pleasure jaunts in 1886 he made the acquaintance in Florida of Miss Bessie Loring of Boston, Massachusetts. From that fortunate meeting a romance developed. They were married at her home in Boston January 18, 1894.

A typical daughter of New England, educated in the best eastern schools, she brought the grace and charm of a cultured and quiet personality into his home and into his life. At the time of their marriage, he was in the midst of his most strenuous early struggles to establish and maintain his new industry. She shared hopefully in all his trials, and she has shared richly in his triumphant successes.

Their only child, Wayne Loring, was born December 19, 1898, in their beautiful new home at the corner of West Berry and Rockhill—now the home of the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum.

Though of a very modest and retiring disposition, Mrs. Thieme has been a rare good scout as the companion of her adventuring husband, as well in his strenuous trips all over the globe as in the eventful journey of life. She has found a quiet satisfaction in their wide range of exhilarating contacts, matching with rare equability his more arduous enthusiasms. Enjoying excellent health and possessed of the enduring charm of cultured gentleness, she is the happy companion of his retirement.

Chapter IX

CIVIC AWAKENING

American travelers returning from Europe invariably bring back enthusiastic reports about European cities. If you ask them in what respect these cities differ from ours, a variety of opinions and descriptions is given. It is a fact, however, that nearly every traveler is very favorably impressed with foreign cities, and freely acknowledges their superiority over American cities in respect to beauty, cleanliness, order, and progress. Having myself often taken observations of foreign cities, and noting as others did, their attractive features, I was gradually educated up to a higher standard of efficiency in the city as a whole, but like other travelers, did not look deeply into the cause.

This opening paragraph of an address by Mr. Thieme before the Textile Industrial Club of the Wayne Knitting Mills and many invited guests on November 8, 1909, may be taken as the first formal expression of his awakening to the need of drastic improvement in the government of American cities. In fact, it was the beginning of a civic crusade which he was to conduct steadfastly for the next eight years.

It was significant that he made this formal beginning before the Textile Club, which he himself had created. It was composed of his own business associates, whom he had chosen and most of whom he had trained from early youth for their important places in the industrial organization which he had founded and carried to success on high humanitarian and business principles. It was natural that he should base this civic crusade from the very beginning upon the obvious parallel that he drew before them between the essential basis of city business and the business principles

of the Wayne Knitting Mills and all industrial organizations that had proved themselves worthy of success and permanence. He said:

The city of Fort Wayne, like other American cities, is a corporation very similar in its make-up and operation to the Wayne Knitting Mills, Fort Wayne Electric Works, or any other corporation; one is a municipal corporation, the others manufacturing ones. In both cases a lease is granted by the state, which also determines its scope of action. Each under its corporate name and through its officers can hold property, make contracts, bring suit, and be sued. The city of Fort Wayne has a mayor; the corporation, a general manager; the city, a council; the corporation, a board of directors. The city has stockholders made up of taxpayers; the corporation likewise has stockholders. The city has a board of public works and a board of public safety; the factory, a superintendent and a body of foremen and foreladies. Both have a treasurer, both a secretary. The city has a civil engineer; the factory, a mechanical engineer. The city builds and maintains street pavements, sidewalks, sewers, and school houses. The corporation erects factory buildings, machinery, improves its property, and maintains it. So far both corporations travel together.

Having thus stated the organic similarity between a city and an industry, he proceeded to explain the tragic divergence of their management in America, particularly with regard to the selection of their officers and employees and the conduct of their affairs.

Every business corporation, through its stockholders, elects its board of directors from among its most capable and responsible members, and the board of directors in turn selects its officers from its most successful and experienced members, or if necessary goes outside the board to fill the more responsible positions. Among these is the position of general manager—equivalent to mayor of a city—who has the responsibility of appointing executives who invariably are experts in their line. When I, as manager, want a foreman for the knitting department, finishing department, or the dye-house, I select a man with experience in his line, and he must come well recommended. A general manager is constantly looking for the best people that can be found to fill any and all positions in his factory. He, as well as all other officers, foremen, and foreladies, are appointed for life, or, as

we say, during good behavior. One of the most valuable assets of a manufacturing corporation is its staff of experienced officers and department heads, who grow in value with each additional year of service and are rarely let out.

Now, how do we select our city officials? We select a man for mayor or general manager from among our citizens out of a choice offered us by our political parties of two or three men whose main qualification must be the ability to get votes. Naturally, such a man must have a clean record for honesty, be of good character, and possess average general ability, but no consideration is given to administrative ability, previous experience, previous success in a business way, or technical knowledge in any of the departments of the city's business. Our city council is selected in much the same manner. I venture to say that three-fourths of the councilmen of any American city are men who were selected by their political parties for their influence as vote getters, and the other one-fourth are men who seek the office for selfish purposes. Very rarely do unselfish business or professional men seek a place in the council chamber.

Then he followed with a clear and simple explanation of the prevailing political custom of changing city officials frequently, which makes it impossible to give cities the benefit of training and experience in public office.

But the worst part of our system is the short term of office. Granting honesty of purpose and a sincere desire on the part of officials of an administration to do their very best for the city, it is, nevertheless, true that after a most expensive apprenticeship running over a period of from two to four years, according to the term of office, during which time the most frightful mistakes are made, and after these officials have become to a certain extent educated and trained to their duties, they are forced out by a new incoming administration, and replaced by a lot of new apprentices. We seem to take particular pride every two to four years in replacing our good men with bad men, the trained with the untrained, and the worthy with the unworthy, simply to show that we, the people, are supreme, and through a little ballot can put into office whomever we please.

He gave concrete examples in Fort Wayne and concluded this primary analysis with a summary contrast of the efficiency and favoritism that prevail in the management respectively of an industry and a municipality.

In the management of a business corporation no favoritism is shown but everything done is in the direction of furthering the interests of the stockholders and the business generally. Employment is given on merit only; purchases are made where best and cheapest; sales are effected in the highest market; discipline is enforced; high credit is sought. In the city government, favoritism is shown in every direction, in the employment of assistants, in purchases, sales, enforcement of laws, granting franchises, and in making improvements; not usually through dishonesty, but through a desire to reward friendship, and on account of pledges, local interests, political and party interests. Can you not see how, in the selection of officials and in the management of its business an industrial corporation has a great advantage over a municipal corporation?

Thus began a public interest and activity in the career of Mr. Thieme which was developed into a veritable civic crusade of eight strenuous years' duration. During that crusade he stated and restated again and again in speeches and articles with many graphic illustrations these fundamental principles that he enunciated first in this modest address before his Textile Club. In this address, he also described the main features of government in several leading foreign cities.

Some five months later, April 18, 1910, he made before the Textile Club a second address that was practically a continuation of the first. He went into more detail explaining briefly the business system that had long been in effect in the government of European cities and, in fact, in leading cities throughout the eastern hemisphere. He explained that America had just begun to show an awakening to the need of changing the old bi-partisan form of city government. The first notable experiment in that direction had come as the result of a terrible disaster. Following the Galveston flood in 1900, the city of Galveston, Texas, had put into successful operation a newly adopted form of government. Some other Texas cities—Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso—had followed the example of Galveston. In 1907, Des Moines, Iowa, had by an act of the legislature made a successful adoption of the commission system called

the "Des Moines Plan." Although this plan had little or no direct similarity to the "business system" of city government in European cities, it was the manifestation of a new movement in the government of American cities.

Mr. Thieme denominated this the "New Movement" and urged vigorously that it be given immediate consideration in Fort Wayne as a beginning. He said in the conclusion of this address:

> Whether or not Fort Wayne is anxious and willing to take up the "New Movement," I am not prepared to say, but I believe we are ripe for it; and since this is the most progressive, aggressive, and rapidly growing city in the state, next to Indianapolis and since it is our desire to improve and enlarge the city, I feel we should take hold of the subject through the Commercial Club at once.
>
> This city and all there is in it is the mutual property of the people who live in it, and it is both our right and duty to have its affairs managed most economically and effectively. Under our present system, we are playing at business, wasting our money and allowing the affairs of the city to be made the football of politicians, instead of a serious business operation. A change can be effected only through the state legislature, which meets next January, after which there is an intermission of two years. If Des Moines and other cities we read about are able to start a movement of this kind and put it through the legislature inside of three months, we ought to be able to accomplish our purpose in one year.

He took pains always to make it clear that he intended no reflection upon the men in office in Fort Wayne or elsewhere. It was a problem of system and not of person. The responsibility must rest upon the people themselves.

He was eager to see the "New Movement" for better city government started in Fort Wayne, but he had no intention of leading or launching it himself. He did a great deal of reading, studying, and observing along that line; and his interest continued to grow. In the meantime, he made another trip abroad that helped materially to give pointed direction to his growing interest in municipal reform, which, as we have noted, had its inception in the impression that had been made upon him by the cleanliness, order, and

beauty of foreign cities as he had observed them on previous European tours.

In 1910, with Mrs. Thieme and their son, Wayne, who was then twelve years old, he made an extensive tour of north and central Europe, particularly Norway, Sweden, and Germany. He made a systematic study of several leading cities—Bremen, Kopenhagen, Gothenburg, Stockholm, and Berlin. His civic interest was accentuated vastly by what he saw and learned.

At least one concrete civic impulse connected with his already fully awakened interest in city improvement came out of that trip. At least, it manifested itself in a very practical way soon after his return. He resolved to make a helpful gesture toward promoting the "City Beautiful" in Fort Wayne, particularly in the beautification of Fort Wayne's extensive river fronts. Acting upon the broad principle that "charity should begin at home," he began very close to home with the beautification of the West Main Street crossing of the St. Mary's River at the foot of Rockhill Street, just a block from his own handsome residence at the corner of West Berry and Rockhill.

In those days he often walked to the knitting mills down Rockhill and across the West Main Street bridge. The dump heap and rubbish pile on the south side of the east end of that important crossing was a public eyesore, which he proposed to remove at his own expense by replacing it with a permanent concrete sustaining wall about 180 feet in length, with ornamental balustrades, railing and coping, providing also for an attractive front of landscaped parking with heavy chain railing and appropriate shrubbery.

In his usual prompt and business-like manner, he procured drawings by George E. Kessler, a distinguished landscape artist of Kansas City, from which exact plans and specifications were made by A. W. Grosvenor, a competent civil engineer of Fort Wayne. The plans were approved and accepted by the city, October 10, 1910. Bids were taken and contract for construction was made with the Herman

Tapp Construction Company, October 15, 1910. The heavy work of excavation and concreting was completed about the time cold weather came, and all was finished early in the spring of 1911.

In the meantime, the Fort Wayne Civic Improvement Association secured the services of Josef M. Korbel of California, an illustrious young sculptor of Bohemian birth and world fame, to design a suitable memorial tablet. Plans for an impressive dedication were delayed until August because of Mr. Thieme's absence on a foreign tour, which included the coronation ceremonies of Georve V of England. Upon his return, the dedication date was set for Saturday afternoon, August 19, 1911. The ceremonies, though simple and unostentatious, in accordance with his express wishes, were, nevertheless, quite significant and impressive.

In its report, the Fort Wayne *News*, August 19, 1911, read in part, as follows:

> This afternoon at 2 o'clock occurred the placing of the bronze memorial to Theodore F. Thieme, for his generosity to the city of Fort Wayne in leading the way in a movement for civic improvement and beautification.
>
> The tablet is a beautiful piece of bronze, bearing the following inscription: "This memorial was placed by the Fort Wayne Civic Improvement Association as a testimonial of appreciation by citizens of Fort Wayne of the generosity of Theodore F. Thieme, who erected this work to mark the awakening of a new civic spirit and the beginning of a general scheme of river improvement. Dedicated 1911."
>
> The Civic Improvement Association is considering the matter of a name for the new piece of ground which was dedicated today. Since Mr. Thieme objects to the name of "Thieme Park," it will be necessary to give it some other appellation. "St. Mary's Embankment" has been suggested as an appropriate name.

The *Journal Gazette* of Sunday, August 20, 1911, commented enthusiastically upon this dedication as the first step in a comprehensive scheme of river improvement in Fort Wayne and reported the ceremony in part, as follows:

> There was no set program for the affair but a number of short talks were given. Josef M. Korbel was present and personally super-

Tablet of River Improvement, dedicated in 1911.

intended the erection of the tablet. At the request of O. N. Guldlin, chairman of the committee, Postmaster Robert B. Hanna acted as chairman of the exercises, and, together with several other gentlemen, spoke informally in a congratulatory way of the start which Fort Wayne has made in this great work, and particularly of the incentive given to the same by Mr. Thieme.

A brief speech of thanks was made by Theodore F. Thieme, after which Mrs. Dawson, as a representative of the Fort Wayne Federation of the Women's clubs, placed an alphabetical list of names of various citizens who had contributed to the fund for the purchase of the tablet in the small crypt. D. N. Foster of the park board, closed the crypt and the tablet was then set in place.

The *Sentinel* of August 19 gave the following illuminating exposition of the significance of the design upon the exquisite tablet:

In his design, Mr. Korbel has sought to typify opportunity, first dormant and then awakened to possibilities, as has been the case with Fort Wayne in its movement for a more beautiful city. Upon either side of the central shield is a half recumbent female figure. To the left is natural beauty along the rivers of Fort Wayne symbolized by a sleeping girl clasping the shield of art. At the right is natural beauty awakened and bearing in her hand the laurel, the symbol of art and culture. In a narrow panel upon either side of the tablet is the palm.

Such was the timely embellishment of an outstanding river site in Fort Wayne, transforming it from a most unsightly dumping ground to a genuine beauty spot. It may be remarked in passing that this immediate section of the right bank of the St. Mary's has several vital human and historic associations. It was the heart of an old Miami Indian village where the first French fort was located. The famous aqueduct of the Wabash and Erie Canal crossed the river right there where the Nickel Plate bridge now is. A few rods up the river was the campus of the Fort Wayne College, better known as the Old Methodist College. All these sites now have distinctive markings. Just one block away on Rockhill, the home of Mr. Thieme, with an

attractive little theater annexed, is now maintained as the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum.

The city council in November 1911, selected Thieme Drive as the name for the new boulevard extending along the St. Mary's from the West Main Street bridge to Swinney Drive in recognition of the handsome improvement at its entrance provided by the foresight and generosity of Mr. Thieme. That improvement was the first physical step toward the ultimate realization of the "City Beautiful" in Fort Wayne, especially in the beautification of its miles upon miles of picturesque water front, as "the city where the three rivers meet." Slow but substantial progress has continued in that direction during the thirty years that have passed since then.

It can hardly be unduly emphasized that the inspiration for this handsome gesture came to Mr. Thieme directly from his discriminating observations in some of the great cities of the world. For example, he had been especially impressed on his European tour in 1910 with the beautiful waterfronts in Stockholm and the scenic parkways of Dusseldorf.

In the *Journal Gazette* of September 1, 1910, a cartoon by the popular cartoonist, Bert Griswold, expressed this fittingly. The cartoon depicted Mr. Thieme emerging from the U. S. Custom House carrying a huge roll under each arm, marked respectively, "New ideas picked up in Europe to be applied in beautifying Fort Wayne" and "Resolution to give financial aid in making Fort Wayne as attractive as European cities." Uncle Sam, as custom agent, is standing at the entry, scratching his head as he comments—

"Wall, I swan! If that fellow didn't come right through a-luggin' the valuablest kind of valuables, and I couldn't levy a cent of customs duty on 'em."

The novelty of introducing a new industry direct from Europe in those early days of Wayne Knitting Mills, proved a fertile field for cartoonists.

Chapter X

A STATE-WIDE CRUSADE

Thieme Drive was the opening stretch, figuratively speaking, of a civic avenue that Mr. Thieme was to follow throughout Indiana in a resolute state-wide crusade. The building of the attractive parkway at the St. Mary's crossing may be considered as the first rung of a civic ladder that Mr. Thieme, with hosts of able associates, tried earnestly to construct. During several of the most active years of his life, immediately ahead, he was to strive unceasingly to scale the heights of progressive civic improvements both in the government of Indiana cities and in the organic law of the state itself.

As already noted in the chapter on "Travel," he took advantage of his continental tour, under the sponsorship of the Boston Chamber of Commerce in 1911, to make first-hand discriminating observation and study of municipal management in several select European cities. With the encouragement and aid of the talented civic experts whom he accompanied on that tour, he delved into the basic principles of city government more deeply than he had ever done before. His progressive ideas were broadened; his resolution to co-operate with increasing vigor in the "New Movement" for better city government in America, and especially in Fort Wayne, was strengthened greatly. He drew encouragement, also, from the co-operation and appreciation that had been shown by his fellow townsmen in connection with his modest gesture toward riverside improvement.

On September 17, 1911, he published an elaborate communication in the *Journal Gazette,* headlined, BRING FORT

WAYNE UP TO DATE—SOME THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS. The article began:

> "The City Beautiful Makes Business" and "Business Makes the City Beautiful," is perhaps an undignified preamble to an article on "City Beautiful," yet quite educational when analyzed.

A careful analysis of the relation between civic beauty and business administration followed. He endorsed heartily the idealistic program of the Fort Wayne Improvement Association but offered a word of caution as to the necessity of a business-like conduct of city control to promote and maintain such a program permanently.

On October 18, 1911, the fourth annual state convention of the Indiana Federation of Commercial Clubs met in Fort Wayne. On the banquet program in the evening, Mr. Thieme, as the local organization's chairman of the committee on improved city government, gave "A discourse on a Modern System of Municipal Government." He presented in careful detail the main features of the Des Moines Commission Plan and the Business (or World) System that prevailed generally in large European cities. He showed that the two plans had many features in common and that both were infinitely better than our bi-partisan political system. He preferred the business form as a better guarantee of freedom from politics and graft.

A round table discussion conducted by himself and Dr. Miles F. Porter followed the next forenoon and the convention went on record in a strong set of resolutions condemning the plan of city government then prevailing in Indiana as "inefficient, expensive, and impractical" and calling upon each commercial club in the state to appoint two of its members before November 1, 1911, to serve on a federated charter committee to "draft charters providing for the most modern and best form of city government and submit the same to the various commercial clubs of the state by the fifteenth day of January, 1912." The resolution provided further that "then the said charter or charters

shall be voted upon by the several commercial clubs and the one being approved by the majority of the commercial clubs of the state shall be the charter approved by the Indiana Federated Commercial Clubs to be presented to the General Assembly of 1913 for passage and adoption."

Thus the Business System of City Government Committee was formed. It was a statewide organization, representing the Chambers of Commerce of the leading cities of Indiana. This federated committee met in Indianapolis, November 23, 1911. The responsible part that Mr. Thieme had in the proceedings of the committee is set forth in part in the following excerpts from the Indianapolis News, November 24:

> T. F. Thieme, a Fort Wayne manufacturer, who was selected as chairman of the committee, presented the "business plan" for the consideration of the delegates at the meeting. . . .
>
> "Broadly speaking, our officials must be selected and not elected," said Thieme.
>
> Urging that city business be handled with the same care and the same attention to efficiency paid by large business concerns, Mr. Thieme outlined what is known as the "business plan." This, it was suggested, should provide for the election of a board of councillors, composed of fifteen members. "This board should be chosen without regard to party," he said, "no party emblem or designation being permitted on the ballot. The thirty leading candidates at the primary," he suggested, "should be put on the ballot at the final election without party designation being permitted."
>
> "The board of councillors should receive only a small salary," he said, "the object being to eliminate men who sought office for pay." The main duties of this board of councillors, as he outlined them, were: The appointment of a mayor and the heads of four departments, these to compose the board of administration; the appointment of three civil service commissioners; the appointment of two election commissioners; the appointment of three school trustees, and the supervision of the tax levy; the councillors being given the power to force the administration to make a tax levy acceptable to two-thirds of the councillors.
>
> The board of councillors under this plan could recall the mayor or any or all of the heads of departments for cause by a two-thirds vote.

The board of councillors could be recalled by the people. By a two-thirds vote the councillors, under this plan, pass on franchises and grants, and if the franchise is not acceptable to the people, the latter can apply the referendum, as under the Des Moines or commission plan. Regular reports of department heads are made to the councillors.

Mr. Thieme believed better men for offices would be selected under this plan, just as private corporations select the most efficient from a list of eligible men for a job. He favored leaving an efficient man in office as long as he was efficient, making the service of the city a life occupation. He pointed out that under the plan the recall of officials by councillors could be only for cause.

A tentative charter framed substantially in accord with the business system presented by Mr. Thieme was agreed upon with the understanding that it would be taken back to the local organizations in order that final concerted action could be had toward introducing it in the Legislature of 1913. On January 12, 1912, the Commercial Club of Fort Wayne, after a spirited and protracted discussion, endorsed the proposed charter. The clubs of many other leading cities followed suit.

March 8, 1912, the federated state committee met again in Indianapolis and after some very earnest deliberation gave its approval to a uniform plan, substantially modelled after the tentative charter adopted by the Fort Wayne Club.

The Indianapolis *News* of March 8 reported the meeting, in part as follows:

Theodore F. Thieme, a Fort Wayne manufacturer, was chosen chairman of an executive organization, which is to plan further movements to get the proposed charter before the people of Indiana.

Headquarters will be established at Fort Wayne. An advisory committee is to be formed, and it will be made up of representatives from commercial bodies, labor organizations, and others that are interested in municipal reform.

The charter committee will submit its report at the convention of the state association next fall. The publicity campaign is to be begun at once.

The committee was reorganized into what will be known as an

improved city government committee, whose duty it will be to educate the people of the state in the merits of the plan adopted. It is planned to do this by forming organizations in all the cities of the state and these separate organizations will be instructed to impress upon the public that the new charter proposed for adoption by the next session of the legislature is not compulsory. The legislature, if it adopts the charter, will simply give the cities the opportunity of following the plan if they so choose.

On May 4, 1912, Mr. Thieme took office as president of the Commercial Club of Fort Wayne. He gave a carefully prepared inaugural address, which began as follows:

It is customary for the newly elected president of the commercial club to deliver an address to the members, evidently for the purpose of introducing himself, stimulating interest, and outlining the policy of the club for the coming year, with suggestions and definite propositions. From the fact that I was elected to this honorable position and that I belong to what might be termed the "conservative progressive," I must assume that I am not alone in this class, but that a majority of the members of this organization are with me and that they expect a progressive speech.

Reforms do not always come about in slow stages, but often in leaps and bounds. We go along for a period in seeming stagnation until our backwardness becomes lamentably apparent, and then we take a big jump. This applies especially to our civic life. I take it we have again reached the time "to take a jump."

At the present time we realize that one great important branch of our activity, our city government, has stood still more than a hundred years while all else has made rapid progress.

After a full analysis of conditions in Fort Wayne, showing the want of progress in municipal administration in keeping with the forward movement of the day, he continued:

Animated with the spirit of progress, and endeavoring to do my share as a citizen and a responsible member of this community, I am contributing from my resources of experience, time, and money to enlist the cooperation of the citizens of the state of Indiana in substituting a modern system of city government to replace our present antiquated, inefficient system. It is upon this platform, I take it, that I have been elected as president of this club, clearly indicating that

members of this organization stand, not only for the commercial interests, but also the civic interests of Fort Wayne.

For several months of 1911 and 1912, Mr. Thieme gave much time and energy to speaking, writing, and organizing on behalf of this movement in Fort Wayne and throughout the state. He addressed various civic organizations in representative cities in all parts of the state, such as South Bend, Gary, Logansport, Terre Haute, Richmond, Hartford City, Muncie, Evansville, Goshen, Mishawaka, and Indianapolis. Keen interest was manifested and the plan was heartily endorsed generally, after thorough consideration and discussion attended by much explantory publicity.

Most of all, of course, Mr. Thieme gave intensive attention toward promoting thorough understanding and co-operation in his own home city of Fort Wayne. He met frequently with representative civic groups of all kinds in Fort Wayne and made every effort to aid in disseminating all essential information concerning the proposed business system of city government. At his expense, many pamphlets and leaflets were printed and distributed liberally. He enjoyed very encouraging co-operation from organized labor and he held many pleasant meetings with individual local unions and with the Fort Wayne Federation of Labor. All of them approved enthusiastically the basic principles of the business plan. One of his first contacts with labor unions was with the journeymen barbers, an incident that revived some agreeable associations, as reported in the *Journal Gazette,* November 3, 1911:

The session was well attended and the members almost unanimously were in hearty accord with the principles of civic government advocated by him. In the early days, which are pleasant memories alike to Mr. Thieme and his barber friends, the speaker was engaged in the barber supply business, and the friendship between him and the profession is still warm.

Mr. Thieme's effort is devoted to interesting the members of various labor organizations, as representatives of Fort Wayne's citizenship, in his plan, and of pointing out its practicability and easy acquirement.

At such a time as the unanimous sentiment of the citizenship would favor such a proposition, the plan is to petition the legislature of the state for an enactment permitting them to hold a special election and determine definitely whether the voters favor such a plan of government.

His efforts were vigorously supported by his own industrial associates, the Textile Union of Knitters and the Textile Club of Foremen and Foreladies of the Wayne Knitting Mills. He was already recognized as a broad-minded friend of labor generally and his friendly relations with organized labor were greatly accentuated by these civic contacts. He addressed the Fort Wayne Federation of Labor at its first regular meeting in January, 1912, and the *Labor Times Herald* of January 5 commented very favorably upon the movement. A special federated committee was appointed to give it thorough study. This committee officially reported unanimous endorsement on April 4, 1912, setting forth several reasons in writing, the first of which was an approval of the plan—

Because it is a system of government under which organized labor can take an active and useful part in city government and not create partisan distractions within its own ranks. The business plan is based upon absolutely non-partisan principles.

It is fitting to observe here that because of Mr. Thieme's extraordinary interest and activity, it was inevitable that public comment should begin to refer occasionally to the proposed business plan of city government as the "Fort Wayne Plan," and sometimes as the "Thieme Plan." This was very much against his wishes and he did everything possible to prevent it, except that he could not abate his activities while the civic campaign was on. His whole heart and mind were enlisted in the movement, and it was his earnest purpose to help develop it as a genuinely co-operative movement. He knew that it could not succeed, and ought not to succeed, on any other basis. His efforts were made openly in his representative capacity as state chairman of the Business System of City Government Com-

mittee and as president of the Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce. It became with him an all absorbing avocation. He devoted time and energy, as well as money, to it and asked and expected nothing in return other than the vast satisfaction of helping to forward a monumental improvement in city government in Indiana and particularly in Fort Wayne.

He had made and continued to make untiring study and research in behalf of this civic cause. He acquired exhaustive and detailed information as to the intimate workings of the business or world system of city government in the most representative cities of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. A letter containing fifteen specific questions was addressed to the mayors of fifty leading cities of the world, which brought complete information, confirming his first-hand studies. Later he published the results of his researches, which were carried on in the following major cities:

The Hague, Holland
Munich, Germany
Lyon, France
Bombay, India
Nottingham, England
Yokohama, Japan
Birmingham, England
Wellington, New Zealand
Manchester, England
Melbourne, Australia
Stockholm, Sweden
Johannesburg, South Africa
Helsingfors, Finland
Calcutta, India
Amsterdam, Holland
Ottawa, Canada
Toronto, Canada
Milan, Italy
Pilsen, Czechoslovakia

Some of these cities were but little larger than Fort Wayne. They ranged in population from 114,150 in Pilsen to 1,383,398 in Calcutta. There was remarkable uniformity in their use of all the main features of the so-called "business plan."

At the annual state meeting of the Indiana Federated Commercial Clubs, which was held in the city of Indiana Harbor, October 3 and 4, 1912, Mr. Thieme, as state chairman and Mr. H. M. Williams, as secretary and publicity dir-

ector, of the Indiana Business System of City Government Committee, presented the plan and the progress made upon it to date. It was approved by the convention and plans were prepared to procure its adoption in the forthcoming Indiana Legislature of 1913. It had attained the character of a state-wide movement. Practically all the local commercial clubs, together with numerous other representative civic bodies, endorsed it and joined vigorously in the campaign to put it into effect. The Municipal League of Indiana in its annual convention at Hartford City, July 11, favored it. A strong state-wide committee of outstanding business men, attorneys, public officials, labor leaders, and educators conducted an educational campaign upon it right up to the opening of the Legislature. Dr. Winthrop E. Stone, President of Purdue University, was an enthusiastic leader in the movement.

A very informative publicity progress was directed by the veteran Fort Wayne Editor, Harry Williams. Questions implying that the system was primarily a businessman's proposition were answered fully.

As state chairman, Mr. Thieme continued to take a very active part in all this promotion right up to the convening of the Legislature. He addressed many public meetings throughout the state, as well as in Fort Wayne, and was tireless in his efforts in all phases of the organized campaign, as well as very generous in his financial support of it, as a movement having the genuinely co-operative character of a state-wide crusade. He made no pretensions as a public speaker and confined himself rigidly to informative analysis in a modest, businesslike way.

The Marion *Chronicle* of January 7, 1913, reporting an enthusiastic meeting that Mr. Thieme addressed there, made the following characteristic comment:

> "The best thing yet," was the unanimous expression of Marion citizens interviewed on the Thieme meeting Monday night. That Mr. Thieme made a great impression with the local public is an established fact. He is not a fluent speaker and talks simply as a business man.

The fact that he is president of the Fort Wayne Knitting Mills, one of the largest institutions of its kind in the state, speaks volumes for his ability as a business man, and the fact that he has successfully managed his own business has impressed the Marion public that he is capable of suggesting a business plan of government for cities.

A bill embodying the proposed charter and empowering any Indiana city upon petition of 25% of its qualified voters to submit the question of its adoption was carefully prepared. Honorable Charles W. Koenig, a representative from Allen County, introduced it in the House of Representatives at the beginning of the session. It was strongly endorsed by resolutions and petitions from civic groups in all parts of the state. There was, of course, a particularly strong endorsement from Fort Wayne by a large number of organizations and by petitions bearing the signatures of more than 3000 leading citizens.

It is to be noted that this so-called business system represented a modest step in advance of the commission form, then in effect in Galveston and Des Moines. It removed the control of the city still farther from partisan politics by interposing the large body of nominally paid, non-partisan councillors between the electorate and the working officials. The natural effect of this was commented upon in an editorial of the Logansport *Daily Tribune,* December 9, 1911, as follows:

The commission form of government gives the politicians a little chance to retain their grip—the business form, such as is proposed by the commercial clubs, offers none. Hence we may be prepared to find the political interests concerned in an effort to stampede the legislature for the commission form instead of the business form on the theory that a half a loaf is better than none. The Federation of Commercial Clubs from every important city in the state, comprising in the membership men of all parties, determined to have government by the people instead of by the politicians, represents a new and tremendous force in state politics . . . the consternation of the politicians is not without cause.

This non-partisan measure was no sooner launched on the perilous sea of legislative adventure than an under-

current of special political opposition began to be felt. The entire state of Indiana, especially in the cities, was notoriously infested at that time with a form of political virus that manifested itself powerfully in the Legislature of 1913, particularly through the political influence of organized liquor and public utility interests. In fact between the years 1912 and 1917, there was an astonishing number of public exposures of graft and corruption in good Hoosier cities, several of which resulted in the indictment, and some in the conviction, of leading city officials. This gave a vigorous impulse to reform, but it also resulted in bringing a formidable lobby to the legislature, where intrenched privilege still had great power through bi-partisan political combines. The professional politician, political grafter, political incompetent, partisan reward seeker, and political job hunter rallied in opposition to any reform that would deprive them of any hope of enjoying further the juicy plums to be had through outworn forms of city administration. A cartoon by Bert Griswold in the Fort Wayne *Sentinel,* January 8, 1913, cleverly depicted this opposition.

After a careful canvass of the legislative situation, the charter committee agreed to amend the bill so as to apply only to Fort Wayne, where it was hoped that a fair trial of the business plan might be had, as a substantial beginning. There was more sentiment for it in Fort Wayne than in any other city. It may also be said, however, that there was probably no other Indiana city in which such special interests as the liquor traffic and public utilities were more powerfully intrenched politically. In fact, while the bill was pending, the mayor, who came from the ranks of labor, appeared before the Fort Wayne Federation of Labor and requested the privilege of speaking on the proposed city government bill. The *Labor Times Herald* on February 28, 1913, reported the incident in part as follows:

> The courtesy was extended and the gentleman immediately launched into an attack upon the proposed business form of government then before the legislature and which the federation had endorsed; and at

The Opposition

The bill asking the legislature to grant to Indiana cities the right to vote on adoption of the Business Form of Municipal Government will come before the Indiana lawmakers during the coming session.

the conclusion of his tirade asked the federation to withdraw that endorsement. To bring the matter before the meeting, a motion was made to rescind the previous action, which raised such a storm that the motion was withdrawn.

Organized labor "stood pat" for the proposed reform and so did all other Fort Wayne civic bodies. The *Sentinel* in an editorial February 13, entitled "Pass the Business System Bill," summed up the local interest in part as follows:

Approximately 3,000 Fort Wayne citizens, individually, have petitioned the Indiana legislature for the enactment of a statute legalizing the proposed business system of municipal government. Definite and unqualified endorsement has been given the measure by the Retail Merchants' Association, the Commercial Club, many of the local labor bodies and a number of other influential Fort Wayne organizations with a representative membership. The clergy has been no less cordial in its approval of the plan, and educators have given it the warmest approbation. Indeed, it is doubtful if any measure in which Fort Wayne is interested ever went before an Indiana assembly with more general or more substantial endorsement than has been vouchsafed to the movement to give the people of this city the power, if they desire to make the change, of substituting an improved order of municipal management for the archaic system under which Indiana cities have been operating. So far as it has been possible to gather and submit public sentiment, the preponderance has been overwhelmingly favorable to the legalization of the business system . . . Certainly Fort Wayne has given a sufficiently definite and conclusive expression of its desire that this bill be enacted into law. It imposes no burden and no mandate upon the people. They are still free to adopt the form or reject it as they desire after it shall become a law. That test will come later. In asking for the passage of the bill Fort Wayne has spoken so plainly that the legislature should be in no doubt as to the city's desire in the matter.

The local charter committee supported by the state organization, headed by Mr. Thieme, made every effort to present the movement fully and fairly to the Legislature. He, with several leaders of the movement, had a thorough hearing before the Cities and Towns Committee, to which the bill was referred. Delegations of representative citizens of Fort Wayne appealed to the Legislature. The members

of the house and senate from Allen County seemed reluctant to take an open stand, and it soon became apparent that they were working against the measure. The Cities and Towns Committee made a divided report—the majority favoring its passage and the minority recommending indefinite postponement.

On February 13, Mr. Thieme published in all the Fort Wayne papers a communication to "The Citizens of Fort Wayne," which read, in part, as follows:

On Friday of last week we had the assurance of a substantial majority of the members for a favorable vote, but unfortunately some of our Fort Wayne representatives in the house and senate, started an active fight against the bill. Many members of the house will vote according to the vote of our representatives, and there is no question but that all depends upon the Fort Wayne members. If they oppose the bill, it is lost, and the responsibility will rest entirely upon them.

This improved city government bill applies to Fort Wayne, only. It is not compulsory. It allows the people of Fort Wayne to decide by vote whether they want to adopt it or continue with the old system. Could anything be fairer? In view of this, nearly three thousand citizens indorsed the bill and signed a petition asking the legislature to give the people of Fort Wayne an opportunity to vote on it.

Our representatives, elected to carry out the will of the people, are refusing to give the people who elected them the right and privilege of voting on this measure. If you object to this high-handed procedure, enter your protest in the shape of a telegram or a letter to our senators and representatives, and send it at once.

Up to the present time, nearly three hundred cities in the United States have eliminated politics in their local government, and the next year will see many more throwing out the old spoils system and adopting more modern methods. Fort Wayne is confronted with an opportunity that she will never have again, one that will mean more to the city at large than a million dollars spent in advertising, and will mean more to the prosperity, health, safety, and happiness of her people than all other agencies combined. If we are deprived of this advantage, the next few years will demonstrate our great loss, and the responsibility and odium of disfavor will rest heavily upon those who oppose the people's will.

The killing of this bill will tie up Fort Wayne for at least four

years, and will leave Indiana practically the last state in the union to adopt modern methods of city government. There is a reason, but of that later.

THEO. F. THIEME,
Chairman of Business Form of City
Government Committee. Adv.

Civic efforts on behalf of the measure were redoubled without avail. The end came on February 25, as reported in a special dispatch from Indianapolis to the Fort Wayne *News*:

The business form of government bill was screwed into its little coffin and buried deeply in the cold, cold ground this morning. The bill is now as dead as a rabbit so far as action on the part of the present legislature goes.

The measure came before the house in the form of a motion to substitute the minority report of the cities and towns committee, which reported in favor of killing the bill, in the place of the majority report which reported in favor of the bill's passage. When the question was presented to the house, there were loud demands for an aye and no vote on the motion, but Speaker Cook refused to take such a vote on the motion, and instead put it to a viva voce vote. He rushed the vote and at its conclusion declared that the motion had passed and the minority report, declaring against the passage of the bill, had been adopted. This put the bill down and out. The speaker used road roller tactics and it was apparent that he was determined to kill the measure.

Theodore Thieme, of Fort Wayne, the father of the bill, was present at the time that the vote was taken. He was also in Indianapolis yesterday urging the solons to pass the bill.

The correct local slant with reference to this arbitrary action of the legislature was given in an editorial of the Fort Wayne *News*, February 25, entitled "Denied a Voice."

The business form of government bill was defeated in the State legislature for the sole and simple reason that the Allen county representatives in both houses wanted it beaten. It had been trimmed until it applied to Fort Wayne only, and when this was done, it was given out that the legislature had no objection to its passage. But immediately certain political interests in Fort Wayne became very busy and as a result, the Allen county legislators proceeded to let it

be known quietly that they wanted the measure killed. Speaker Cook did the rest yesterday.

The legislature that was elected under the pledge to promote the widest and freest expression of local self-government, coldly refused the people of Fort Wayne an opportunity to determine for themselves the sort of government they wanted. The bill as framed, would not, if passed have bound the people of this city to a business form of government. It simply would have authorized them to determine at an election whether they desired such a change. It was designed to put the whole matter up to those most intimately and vitally concerned —the citizens of Fort Wayne. And the citizens of Fort Wayne by their own representatives have been denied a voice in their own affairs.

Mr. Thieme's reaction to this legislative debacle, which he could hardly see in any other light than as a gratuitous outrage upon the civic sincerity of his own home city, was expressed in a news item of the Fort Wayne *News* February 26.

Theodore F. Thieme, father of the business form of government, whose measure was done to death in the state legislature yesterday, returned to Fort Wayne this morning. While deeply regretful that the present legislature did not enact the measure into a law, he declares that the effort to secure its adoption will continue.

"The work will have to go forward under a different plan, that's all," declared Mr. Thieme. "I'll have to tell the people of Fort Wayne what ails them and I shall do this in a few days in a communication through the press."

He put this purpose into effect in a long and carefully prepared address before a large public meeting. Without mincing words, he recited in concrete detail the gross and illuminating record, showing beyond doubt that the state of Indiana and the city of Fort Wayne were in the grip of partisan politics, dominated largely by insidious interests that could exist and thrive only by maintaining outworn systems by which the people could be prevented from having a direct voice in their own common public concerns. He called for a united front by all good citizens to overcome this public menace. His address was published in a pam-

phlet, entitled "What Ails Us," and distributed to every home in the city.

This somewhat painstaking recital of the crusade for better city government from 1909 to 1913 has been given here as a matter of objective history. The contemporaneous source records cited—extracts from speeches, news articles, editorials, and official proceedings—reflect the deep-seated civic motive that inspired Mr. Thieme, and they exhibit his herculean efforts to effectuate it. They explain also the wide recognition of a need for reform in this field, as manifested by the representative backing he received. They show his broad-minded constructive purpose to help forward a concrete reform, purely as a cooperative movement for the public welfare, and they reveal unhappily the political grip by which some powerful special interests were wielding a sinister inside control over the civic destiny of Indiana, and perhaps nowhere more completely than in Fort Wayne.

Though deeply disappointed, Mr. Thieme was in no way daunted or disheartened. His convictions, supported by years of intense research, study, and observation, were too deeply rooted to wilt with temporary reverse, however significant and far reaching the implications of the reverse. Almost without his own initiative, he was launched upon a larger crusade, with the state of Indiana as the arena. For four more strenuous years, 1913 to 1917, he was allied with many kindred spirits and cooperative associations in a non-partisan civic effort to help bring about an up-to-date revision of the Constitution of Indiana to the end that the people, regardless of partisan interests, might have a larger control of their own public affairs, particularly in the rapidly growing cities. Constitutional home rule for cities became his special interest along with other kindred reforms. With more than crusading sincerity, he gave to this voluntary public service unstintedly of his time, energy, and money.

The limitations of this biography do not permit a detailed

account of his earnest civic efforts during these four years such as has been attempted with reference to his crusade for a business system of city government in Fort Wayne. Suffice it to say that they were marked by the same unselfish zeal and constructive cooperation against insuperable odds and that they are fully recorded in contemporaneous source literature of the time. A complete review would constitute an epitome of the civic and political history of Indiana during that hectic period. A brief outline, or summary, will serve perhaps to show something of the spirit and scope of Mr. Thieme's public efforts during those years.

The Legislature of 1913 submitted by independent ballot, to be voted on in the election of 1914, the question of calling a constitutional convention in the year 1915. At the same time, the Legislature proposed a series of twenty-two makeshift amendments to the Constitution, which through long experience had been found almost unamendable. There was general recognition of the need of substantial revision of Indiana's Constitution, which had been outgrown in many important features, since its adoption in 1851. This was graphically expressed by Governor Samuel M. Ralston in his inaugural address and first message to the Legislature in 1913.

> New problems have arisen that cannot be solved under the present instrument and new conditions make it necessary for the people to assert rights they cannot exercise there-under.

This was especially true as to modern municipal problems. There were no cities when the constitution was written, and it had made no provision for them. By default, as it were, they fell under legislative control as "corporations other than banking," subject to the worst muddling of state and national politics, of which an illuminating demonstration had been made in the Legislature of 1913. Other organic revisions were contemplated with reference to taxation, suffrage, judicial and legislative procedure, county and township government, labor and social justice, and the

like. Mr. Thieme joined heartily with other public-spirited citizens and groups that looked forward to a fair chance for modern revision through a non-partisan constitutional convention that could submit these proposed reforms separately, each upon its own merit for approval or rejection by the people.

In all his speeches and writings on behalf of a new constitution for Indiana he based his views solidly upon the basic demand to meet the fundamental changes that had taken place since the formation of the old constitution in 1851. This demand had already been met by the adoption of new constitutions in many of our sister states, notably Ohio and New York. Here is one of Mr. Thieme's characteristic introductions of the subject.

> One of the signs of a political awakening of the people in many states of the Union is a demand for new state constitutions. The same underlying causes which are creating a demand for a change in the charters governing our cities, apply also to the fundamental laws of our state. Both our present system of city government and the State Constitution of Indiana are equally out of date and out of tune and cannot supply present needs. In other words, we are trying to run the civic affairs of a motorized age with stage coach equipment.

This organic need was given emphatic expression from responsible sources throughout an active civic campaign for several years. Leading educators, jurists, business men, labor leaders and influential women's organizations joined heartily in the movement. President Winthrop E. Stone of Purdue University was one of Mr. Thieme's most ardent colleagues, both in his fight for a business system of city government and for a new state constitution. Governor James P. Goodrich, in his first message to the legislature in 1917, said:

> Since 1851, state government has become so complex that many of the provisions of the constitution which were in point sixty years ago, no longer cover our present conditions of society . . . The public interest requires that there be no further delay in changing the constitution so that we may meet squarely the important problems which

confront us at this time. I believe, as a matter of fact, that these changes can be accomplished more satisfactorily through a constitutional convention than through any other method.

A three-day Constitutional Convention Conference was called at Indiana University, July 8-10, 1914, to present the needs for a revision of the state's constitution. Mr. Thieme was asked to present the subject of organic municipal needs. Out of this conference, the Citizens' League of Indiana was formed for the promotion of an educational civic campaign on behalf of the calling of a convention. Its principal activities were the printing and distribution of literature and the conduct of a voluntary speakers' bureau.

Thus the League became a state organization, a definite federation of representative clubs and groups having a common interest in calling a non-partisan constitutional convention. Mr. Thieme remembers with much pleasure the fine company of well known men and women, too numerous to mention individually, who constituted that organization. It was similar to the company that had composed the Business System of City Government Committee. Many of them have passed away. They represented every walk of life and every outstanding civic organization of statewide character. Notable among them were such worthy leaders as Professor James A. Woodburn of Indiana University, Judge W. H. Eichhorn of Bluffton, James H. McGill, Valparaiso manufacturer, H. B. Snyder, Editor of Gary Post, Fred W. Keller, Mayor of South Bend, James P. Goodrich (later Governor), Dr. Amelia R. Keller, President of Women's Franchise League, and Dr. Winthrop E. Stone, President of Purdue University. President Stone was a very ardent member both of the Business System of City Government Committee and the Citizens League of Indiana. Prominent citizens of Fort Wayne, as well as of other cities, also took leading parts. Mr. Thieme was made chairman of the executive committee and became one of the most vigorous members and the chief financial supporter. He continued speaking and writing with an ever broadening in-

terest, placing special emphasis all the while upon the need of constitutional home rule for cities. Some of his speeches were published and distributed in pamphlet form.

Because of the confusion caused by the twenty-two pending amendments and the opposition of corrupt partisan politics and of liquor and public utilities, the vote for a constitutional convention did not carry in the election of 1914. The Citizens' League continued its activities, and largely through its efforts the twenty-two makeshift amendments were dropped in the Legislature of 1915. A monthly magazine, *The Citizen,* was published by the League, with Mr. Thieme as special editor of the City Government department. He contributed a comprehensive article for every issue. Ross F. Lockridge (the author of this biography) was secretary of the Citizens' League and managing editor of *The Citizen,* giving all his time and effort to promoting the New Constitution movement for three years. The league sponsored many forums, conferences, institutes, school contests, and other educational programs throughout the state in preparation for a thoroughly representative constitutional convention.

As a result of the civic interest thus awakened throughout Indiana, the Legislature of 1917, prompted in part by the vigorous leadership of Governor James P. Goodrich, passed an act calling a constitutional convention in Indiana on the second Tuesday in January, 1918. It provided for the non-partisan election of 115 delegates at a special election on the third Tuesday in September, 1917. One delegate was to be chosen from each of the 100 representative districts of the state and 15 were to be elected on a general ballot from the state at large. The League prepared and published an elaborate *New Constitution Text-Book and Manual of Ready Reference* and promulgated plans for a series of forums for the study and discussion of all important phases of constitutional revision and for the advancement of the best possible men and women as delegates.

Mr. Thieme took a very interested part in all this as the

foremost sponsor of the Citizens' League. The demand was universal that, because of his preeminent grasp of all issues involved in the making of a new constitution, he accept the duty and honor of becoming one of the delegates at large to the constitutional convention. A high point in the campaign was a complimentary New Constitution dinner given largely as an ovation to Mr. Thieme in the Elks' Hall in Fort Wayne, March 9, 1917. It was attended by hundreds of enthusiastic citizens. Governor James P. Goodrich headed the list of prominent speakers, who represented all parts of the state. Similar dinner programs in the nature of constitutional convention symposiums were duplicated in other leading cities throughout Indiana.

In the midst of these preparations, the Supreme Court of Indiana declared in a divided opinion on July 13, 1917, that the Legislature was without authority to call a convention and that the act was therefore unconstitutional. The question as to whether or not there existed any authorized method by which a convention may be had for giving a new constitution to Indiana was left open.

Mr. Thieme looked upon this court decision as a "knockout" for the time being at least. The World War had been in progress for three years, and the United States had just become involved in it. Under these circumstances and because of considerations of health and business, he decided to abandon further prosecution of civic reform as a special activity. He had devoted his best efforts with almost superhuman zeal and energy to civic causes in which he still maintained unshaken faith. He had carried aloft the banner of civic advancement with hosts of able and loyal confederates to the very last ditch and had helped to reveal beyond any doubt some urgent needs and insuperable obstacles that he thought would one day be surmounted. He felt confident that the educational value of that civic crusade was real and lasting.

He had formed hundreds of lasting friendships—still remembered with pleasure—and had incurred some imper-

sonal animosities, which were soon gladly forgotten. A typical association of that period was the friendship formed with Dr. James Albert Woodburn, Professor of History of Indiana University. Dean of history teachers and a high-minded philosophical historian, Dr. Woodburn also took a very active interest in public affairs on an educational basis. Although of about the same age as Mr. Thieme and long since retired as Professor Emeritus, he is still keenly alert on all vital public issues and remembers well his active association with Mr. Thieme of more than a generation ago. Speaking at Indiana University on his eighty-fourth birthday, he said:

> I recall those busy years of work for civic reform in Indiana, side by side with Mr. Thieme, very pleasantly. He is a fine man. I never knew a better. His unselfish work for better state and city government in Indiana, was an outstanding example of a genuine civic crusade. His efforts resulted in permanent educational benefit to our state.

It is worthy of note that during some of these years—especially the World War years, 1914-1917—the demands of Mr. Thieme's own business were very heavy upon him. It was a boom period for the Wayne Knitting Mills. By reason of his excellent manufacturing organization and his superb executive ability, he was able to maintain perfect control at all times, without relaxing his public activities. Although he expended time, energy, and money almost lavishly, his own business interests never suffered.

He was never accused of self-seeking, other than by occasional insinuations in caustic editorials that he was leading a "glory quest." However, even these ungenerous flings never failed to make the saving exception to his credit —to wit, that if he really did want a "laurel wreath or an amaranthine bay, he would pay for it himself; he was no petty grafter and wanted no penny from the public fee."

He continued as a sympathetic and supporting member of a score or more of voluntary civic associations of national character, and has watched with interest even the small

advances of various civic reforms. He has noted with particular satisfaction the continued triumphant progress of municipal ownership of public utilities.

His last public act of civic consequence was the promulgation in 1934 of a treatise in the form of a well-printed and attractively bound booklet of ninety pages. It is entitled *A Business System of City Government* and contains in concise form the results of his study and research in that important field, presenting a practical "plea for the adoption of the European (or world) system of municipal government in the United States." This booklet is to be found in public libraries throughout the land.

Many of the pamphlets of his civic warrior days are still in circulation through University Extension package libraries.

In the conclusion of this treatise, he voices the following solemn but hopeful prophecy:

> A readjustment in world economic affairs is inevitable. Surely, America will play an important part. It is probable that ours may be the most important part, as our stakes are the largest. We must prepare for it. We can do this nowhere better than in the cities. In no manner can we find a more effective stabilizer and guide than in our city governments, if our city governments are modernized under a business system. The cities may even lead the nation.
>
> We may be at the dawn of an awakening that will bring a spirit of enlightened cooperation, national and local, such as we have never contemplated. Perhaps the nation will come to the aid of the cities by maintaining a great academy for the training of public administrators as it now does of the army and navy, as suggested recently by a prominent writer. Then our cities would become reservoirs of confidence and strength rather than spectacles of confusion and incapacity. Instead of being the failures of democracy, they may become the hope of democracy.

Chapter XI

THE UNION AND THE STRIKE

In the summer of 1919, Dr. John R. Commons, Professor of Political Economy in the University of Wisconsin, investigated industrial conditions in the United States with particular reference to the labor situation. Dr. Commons was an eminent specialist in this field, a scholar, teacher, and writer of the highest rank. He adopted an original method of research by making extended visits to several selected industries. Choosing the Wayne Knitting Mills as an outstanding example of favorable relations between employer and employee, he came to the plant in person, the third week of August, 1919, with four advanced students of labor problems in order to make a thorough investigation on the ground. He wrote Mr. Thieme a letter on August 9, in which he said:

> Our purpose is to get information that will be of value to business men and employees in dealing with these questions and to make a comparative study of the main features in different places.

He spent several days in the mills and was extended every courtesy both in office and shop. Mr. Thieme was away at that time. Having taken names of representative employees from the Knitters' Union and from the management, Dr. Commons paid these workers for their time and interviewed them, one by one, without restriction of any kind. He found that the labor situation was unqualifiedly satisfactory from the standpoint of the laborers themselves. He was given assurance universally by the officers of the union and by every individual knitter whom he interviewed, that all were

in perfect harmony with the management and that there was complete personal confidence between the Knitters' Union and Mr. Thieme, the president and manager of the plant.

Dr. Commons was deeply impressed with this fact—the unusually close and confidential personal relation between Mr. Thieme and the workers; and on the strength of the enthusiasm of the employees, he and his trained assistants placed the Wayne Knitting Mills at the top of their list of industries exemplifying "Faith in Management."

As a result of this investigation, Dr. Commons began the preparation of a comprehensive article, after his general report, covering the happy industrial situation in this particular plant. The article was to be entitled "Why They Stick to Their Knitting." Before it was finished, the Knitters' Union, No. 765, declared a general strike in the Wayne Knitting Mills, which became effective December 1, 1920. After that date, the Knitters were no longer sticking to their knitting.

The story of that strike shows the contrast between individual and group action, in the relation of employer and employee. It shows also how seriously local industrial relations may be affected by the nation-wide affiliations of organized labor—how the members of a local union may be induced by their national federation to act as they probably would not act as individual members of their own local body. Every member of the Knitters' Union in Fort Wayne was a personal friend of Mr. Theodore F. Thieme—some of them of thirty years' standing. They had helped build the Wayne Knitting Mills and had shared its success with him. Most of them had reaped rich benefits, personally, apart from their work, for themselves and their families from his friendly helpfulness. For all this, they were duly grateful. Every one of them had trusted him implicitly through the years and had found that trust unfailingly justified. Yet out of an extraordinary industrial situation—the result of a World War complex—over which neither he nor they had any

control, they arose as one man, at the behest of unionism, in a lethal strike which dissolved forever these happy relations.

Here a bit of history will be illuminating. The local Knitters' Union in Fort Wayne was formed May 14, 1911, with a charter membership of ninety-one, which increased in less than a year to 188 and in five years to 257. Every knitter who possessed the trade qualifications was affiliated. It became one of the strongest units of the Textile Workers of America. When this local was formed, the introduction of unions in non-organized industries was looked upon generally with much disfavor by employers. But the Wayne Knitting Mills became an exception to the rule. This was due entirely to the broad-minded fairness of Mr. Theodore F. Thieme. True to the close personal relation and friendly cooperation that he maintained always toward these employees upon whom he looked as his co-workers, he refused to interfere in any way with the formation of the union, although his managerial associates were very doubtful about it. He gave it immediate recognition and established a policy of full cooperation with union officers and committees. In due course, he came to be well known as a friend of organized labor generally.

The happy situation thus developed was expressed most graciously by the knitters themselves when the union gave Mr. Thieme a formal reception and entertainment, August 25, 1916, during the celebration of The Silver Anniversary of the founding of the Wayne Knitting Mills. This unusual event was fully reported in the Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette* the following day, August 26, 1916, in an article which we quote in part:

> For the first time in the history of Fort Wayne, labor entertained capital last night when the Knitters' Union became hosts to the officers and management of the Wayne Knitting Mills at one of the greatest anniversary gatherings ever held at the big plant. The entire undertaking was a gigantic surprise party on President Theodore F. Thieme, who, invited to what he expected would be a local smoker,

found himself the guest of honor at a splendid reception and celebration, planned by the knitters as their recognition of the silver jubilee of the building of the mills.

A magnificent silver loving cup, sixteen inches high, bearing a likeness of Mr. Thieme and the great industry of which he is the head, as well as a suitable inscription from the donors, was presented during the evening.

Past President Charles Butler, of the Knitters' Union, made an admirable address. He referred to the gathering as one unprecedented in the history of the country, where a labor union celebrated with the officers of the concern which employed them as its invited guests. He referred to the amicable relations existing between the employer and employed and declared that this closer relationship and better understanding to the mutual advantage of both, would have been impossible had there not been a union.

The speaker paid a touching tribute to Mr. Thieme in the personal interest he had taken in his employees in the old days, especially when the mill was small and when the manager had the time to do this.

"Mr. Thieme knew every employee by his first name. He knew every child in the community and when each baby had its first tooth," declared Mr. Butler amid laughter and applause.

Mr. Thieme responded with a talk, interspersed with many humorous stories. He said in part:

I shall try to speak to you of the significance of this entertainment, arranged for by the working men of the W.K.M., in commemoration of our twenty-fifth anniversary and in honor of the institution in which they are employed, in whose upbuilding they have been a conspicuous part. A most significant feature of this meeting is the fact that organized labor in the employ of W.K.M. is the host to its officers and stockholders; labor is entertaining capital. I do not remember a similar incident in Fort Wayne industrial circles, or for that matter anywhere else. Employee is entertaining employer.

Gentlemen, this would not be possible but for the higher ideals which have permeated the Wayne Knit Organization, both management and employees. It would not be possible unless both employer and employee respected each other, and both agreed to each other's rights and limitations. It would not be possible if both parties were not doing their utmost in skill and efficiency, to hold up their end and their part of the business.

We have representatives here this evening of capital and of labor, of employer and of employee. When we analyze a manufacturing plant correctly, we will find it is a mutual affair of business—a joining of money and of labor. Both want returns, and both depend on each other to get it. Neither one can do without the other. There has never been any question about the right of capital to organize, nor is there now scarcely any more question as to labor's right to organize.

In conclusion he voiced an admonition that in the light of later events seems almost prophetic.

However, I am not so optimistic or short sighted as to believe that conditions may not arise some day in this country, when capital and labor everywhere will be at "war," and our institution here may be threatened; but I will leave it to you, who will have the best chance for the quickest recovery—an institution like ours, or the other kind? Is it not more likely that a family whose members respect and know each other and have always lived peaceably, should more quickly recover from a temporary disagreement, than a family whose members are quarrelsome and suspicious, and don't understand or know each other? Differences arise between man and wife, between partners in business; but that does not make marriage a failure, nor business partnership a failure."

Those happy relations continued for four years longer. World War conditions brought vast profits—large dividends and high wages. All Wayne Knit employees had a goodly share in the general prosperity. Frequent wage advances were made, until on June 1, 1920, wages had increased from 100% to 300% and on top of this, there was the profit sharing.

Mr. Thieme planned a trip to Europe in June, 1920, to purchase machinery and investigate the world situation. All the business was then at the peak of prosperity and high prices, but it was already apparent that the bubble was due to burst soon. A final profit sharing dispensation was made in the Wayne Knitting Mills so that all might share in the general prosperity while it lasted. This distribution amounted to 25% of wages for six months. The Knitters' Union requested that instead of straight profit sharing in the form of a bonus, in the total amount of 25% of six

months' salary, they receive it by regular installments in their pay envelopes. This amounted in effect to a 25% increase in wages for the six months.

Mr. Thieme agreed to this with the understanding that it would terminate on December 1, 1920. During those six months business conditions underwent a rapid decline everywhere, and it became increasingly evident that there could be no thought of doing otherwise than to return on December 1, to the basic wage scale of June 1, as stipulated. On his return from Europe, Mr. Thieme had several friendly sessions with union committees in which he explained the situation to them. On October 26, 1920, an official notice was posted in the mill stating that the profit sharing increase to the wage scale would be withdrawn on November 29, 1920, according to the June agreement, and that a new wage scale would go into effect, based upon the wage scale that existed prior to June 1, 1920.

At nine o'clock on the morning of December 1, 1920, the full-fashioned knitters struck. It was a very orderly and, in fact, a very solemn occasion.

An eye witness wrote Mr. Thieme, who was then in California, a first-hand account, in part as follows:

> Everything started off as usual, excepting that here and there among the departments, employees who did not wish to take any position in the "walk out," did not come to work at all. The knitters all took charge of their machines and started in, as if they intended to work all day. Shortly before nine o'clock it was evident they were cleaning up, preparatory to closing up. Every knitter finished his work completely, and most of them cleaned and oiled their machines and put everything in order.
>
> I was passing around amongst them all the time, and I did not hear one unkind word or harsh expression. Shortly before nine o'clock they stopped work, and promptly at nine they all went out. I could not but be impressed with the modesty and dignity of their demeanor. A good many of the girls cried and all of the men were looking very solemn and sincere. They walked away almost like a funeral procession and there was not a shout or a laugh anywhere.

Some seventy-five men from the boarding room and several workers from other departments followed, making a total of about 600 out on strike. About 1800 people remained at work, and the general wage scale of June 1, 1920, went into effect. The mill remained open, and except for full-fashioned knitting and boarding, the work went on about as usual. Picketing soon began but there was no violence or riot at any time. The knitters kept open house at union headquarters, and friendly negotiations were kept up with the management.

Mr. Thieme returned to Fort Wayne from Los Angeles in January and immediately issued an invitation to the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Brothers Company employees to meet with him for a free and open discussion of the whole situation.

None of the strikers appeared at the opening of the meeting; but all other employees, together with foremen, and other officials, including many stockholders, were present, and remained throughout a long and interesting session. Mr. Thieme gave a carefully prepared address which was afterwards printed and published in full and a copy sent to each striking employee. He said in part:

Recognizing that the Wayne Knitting Mills' trouble is largely due to lack of information or to misinformation, I have decided to discuss with you in a straightforward manner the various phases of our situation. In June of last year, I went to Europe to purchase machinery and investigate the European situation. At that time we were at the peak of prosperity and high prices, but it was clear to all far-sighted business men that the bubble was due to burst soon. My investigations confirmed this.

By the middle of October, business was at a standstill, and I was seriously considering the question of shutting it down completely. But I am old fashioned and stick to the old remedies—and every time the question came up, something would whisper in my ears, "this factory never has and never will shut down because of business conditions." So we kept on running. I had made all plans to enter upon my first season of retirement and to spend the winter in California. Before starting on November 1st, I called a meeting of the Union Committee

and said to them that conditions are "so and so," but that we would run the factory until December 1st and pay the scale agreed upon to everybody; however, on December 1st, we would have to go back to the June 1, 1920, scale. We had four meetings at which I presented all the facts in my possession; in addition, I pledged my personal word that what we proposed was absolutely necessary, that it was the very best we could do, and that if the committee turned us down, it would be a slap at me personally. In other words, it would be equivalent to discrediting me and would mean a severance of our Union relations. I said over and over again that in case of strike, I would never deal with a Union Committee.

Then he continued with a frank and detailed explanation of the current business trend exactly as it affected wages in his mill:

About November 1st, business conditions were growing steadily worse, and it was clear that a world-wide panic was in full swing. The world was at last coming to its senses and finding that war prices and wages could not continue much longer.

He gave some specific facts and figures illustrating the exact relation between prices and wages in the mills and in closing made the following personal comment:

I have often tried to answer in my own mind a question put to me some years ago by a friend, when he asked, "What would you like to have as a monument?" Up to the present time I have been unable to think of anything more alluring than to leave behind an institution that truly represents an advanced type of cooperative industry or "Industrial Democracy."

In conclusion let me say to all Wayne Knitters, that whatever you do, don't hurt WAYNE KNIT. Your bread and butter, and to an extent your future happiness, depend upon the preservation of this industry. It has taken thirty years to build it up, but it can be wrecked in that many weeks. You now have the facts and know the conditions. Let everybody do his own thinking and act accordingly.

Shortly after this meeting, Mr. Thieme returned to Los Angeles. He was receiving treatment for his health in that invigorating climate and was at the same time forwarding plans for the building there of a large new plant for the Thieme Brothers Silk Hosiery Company. A state of peace-

ful separation continued in Fort Wayne between the Wayne Knitting Mills and the striking knitters. The mill continued to run, and the strikers kept open house at their union headquarters. They promoted large social activities to cultivate morale—smokers, dances, prize-fights, and the like. They had an able press committee that disseminated news and propaganda regularly. In the meantime they maintained orderly picketing, which the press committee explained in the following modest announcement in the *Journal Gazette*, December 9, 1920.

> When the mills began advertising for help, the men volunteered for picket duty and are now stationed at the mill to explain the labor situation to those seeking employment. That is their only duty—explaining the labor situation. If prospective employees then want to enter the service of the mill, they are not molested in any way.

It may be said here in justice to this body of skilled workmen that this strike came to be distinguished for its orderly and amicable nature.

Negotiations continued throughout February, March, and April between the management and the union without results. Mr. Thieme was keeping in vital touch with the situation from his distant post in the West, where he could obtain a clear perspective. All his waking hours—often far into the night—he was studying the problem of how to deal with the striking employees.

Reviewing the situation, twenty years later as it seemed to him in retrospect, Mr. Thieme recently wrote of it:

> Hosiery manufacturers, like all other machine producers during the last three war years, were called on to supply the whole world. Raw materials and labor had reached unheard-of prices. Profits for everybody were equally large. Union wage scales had been scrapped for whatever higher wages were necessary to secure labor. It was a wild, wide-open chaotic situation, where everybody was out to get his or her share while it lasted, knowing full well it must come to an end soon. And now the end had come. Labor troubles appeared everywhere; hosiery factories in the East were nearly all shut down by strikes.
>
> I was naturally greatly upset by the sudden action of our knitters

and puzzled at their attitude in taking no action to reach some agreement with me. It soon dawned on me that our labor was just part of a nation-wide movement of organized labor to maintain war wages. The presence of prominent national union officials, from headquarters in Philadelphia, engaged in active but secret consultations with our local union officials, combined with other strange (to me) attitudes and actions of the knitters as a body, gradually brought to me the conviction that this strike was not conceived nor carried on by our union employees. It seemed clear that pressure had been exerted and a pledge exacted to support this national movement of labor connected with union organizations.

When I grasped this far-reaching situation, I realized the uselessness of attempting to end our strike through persuasion, compromise, or otherwise; but we must await some settlement of the greater nationally sponsored program of union labor in general.

As hope of adjustment faded, he conceived the bold and original idea of supplanting those obdurate knitters with new employees trained under an entirely new and extensive form of apprenticeship. So he formed the determination of ending the strike either by a general return of the strikers at once or by dismissing them forever.

Arriving in Fort Wayne on the morning of April 18, he made a last overture by publishing an invitation in the paper that day.

April 18, 1921

ATTENTION WAYNE KNIT STRIKERS

You are cordially invited to meet with the management of the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Bros. Co. on Tuesday afternoon, April 19, at two o'clock, second floor new silk building.

THEO. F. THIEME,
President.

The results of this effort are fully set forth in Mr. Thieme's address to the stockholders, June 21. He said in part:

I reached Fort Wayne myself on Monday, April 18, called a meeting of the Board of Directors with factory officials on that same morning, and an invitation was issued through the press that noon, inviting

all strikers to meet with me on Tuesday afternoon. A series of questions were asked the Union Committee.

The first was, "Upon what terms will the strikers come back to work?" The answer was unanimous from the entire committee, that they would not compromise, but would demand that they return upon the same conditions that existed when they went out. They were then asked if they desired complete surrender on the part of the Wayne Knitting Mills, and they said "Yes." They were asked, if from the day of the strike to the present day, they had ever offered a compromise or considered a compromise, and they said, "No, we have not." They were asked what attitude they would take on our apprentice school, and they informed us that they would object to it, or, at least, they would expect to regulate it. They were asked, "What is really your objection to wage reduction?" Their answer was, "All the other mills are getting 1920 prices, and if they can pay it, why can't the Wayne Knitting Mills?" (It may be interjected here that all the other mills were not paying 1920 wages. In fact, most of them were closed, or were running only on part time.)

Questions along these lines were asked the Committee, and after that I talked to them upon the general situation of business and our desire to have the strike settled. In closing, I stated that in view of the attitude they had taken, we were now forced to fight and that we would now fight this thing out to a finish. They were then told that they would be given time to come to work until Thursday morning and that if they did not come to work at that time, we would discharge sixteen of the most radical leaders, selected by the Manufacturing Committee, and make public announcement of it. This public announcement was made in the Thursday evening papers, and notice went to each one of the sixteen men.

That notice, issued on April 19, was as follows:

Acting upon resolutions passed by the board of directors and by the members of the manufacturing committee, notice is hereby given to certain employees of the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Bros. Company, whose names follow, that they are discharged and that they will never again be permitted to have employment with either company.

Signed WAYNE KNITTING MILLS,
THEO. F. THIEME, Pres.
THIEME BROS. CO.
J. A. THIEME.

A report of the factory auditor on the sixteen discharged union strikers covering their earnings from July 1 to November 1, 1920, showed that the two main leaders earned on an average $13.50 a day; and the other fourteen from $11.50 to $13.00 a day, and that they had had work every day, six days a week.

The knitters made dignified claims and protests through their press committee. They insisted sturdily upon their right to present their case through union officials, and they protested earnestly that they did not intend any personal indignity to Mr. Thieme in so doing.

Mr. Thieme maintained just as sturdily his refusal to deal with the organization instead of with his employees. In a formal message to the secretary, April 28, he declined to receive an official letter of the union:

Dear Sir:

We are returning the letter, which you delivered to the writer yesterday, as we find that this is signed by an individual who is not now in our employ, and by you, as an officer of the Knitters' Union, which organization we no longer recognize. In view of this situation, we therefore return the communication.

Yours very truly,
WAYNE KNITTING MILLS,
Theodore F. Thieme, President.

The next action of the management was a declaration of independence, of which Mr. Thieme made the following report to the stockholders in the address quoted above.

We next informed them that if they did not return by the following Monday, we would take our next step, which we did on the following Saturday, April 30—our so-called "Declaration of Independence," as follows:

Since there is evidently much confusion concerning our attitude toward a strike settlement in the minds of employees of the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Brothers Company, who are not working, we desire to make our position clear.

The Board of Directors, the Manufacturing Committee, the Executive Committee, and the management have resolved:

1. That this will be an **Open Shop** and that there will be no recognition of the union hereafter.
2. That the plan of wages as proposed for December 1st (which has been in effect in both organizations since that date, proving satisfactory to the 1000 people at work) is to be continued.
3. That we introduce a system of intensive training of knitters, and equip the plant as quickly as possible with such.
4. That old knitters be given employment so long as machines are available, but no new knitters shall be discharged to make room for old knitters later on.
5. That Thieme Brothers Company machinery will be removed elsewhere as soon as new buildings can be erected. In the meantime this factory is open for employees excepting such as have been notified of their discharge, if they desire to work. If not, the factory will remain closed until time of removal.
6. That a cordial invitation to work is extended to employees who are not working (either because they are on strike or because others are striking), and department heads are instructed to make arrangements to furnish employment as quickly as possible to those applying.

This ended the strike as far as Mr. Thieme and the Mills were concerned. The strikers were given no further consideration. They were no longer employees.

A business men's committee and the Employers' Association attempted to intervene. The newspapers mildly urged conciliation, and some miscellaneous gestures were made looking toward an impossible compromise. It was all without avail. It was an irrepressible conflict—national labor union policy dictating local union labor organization in industry at a critical industrial hour.

Summing up this situation recently—twenty years afterward—Mr. Thieme wrote:

The strike was over. We had passed through four months of watching and waiting without a change in the situation. Reports from eastern factories showed the same condition. Nothing but complete surrender was the ultimatum of the union committee. Our only hope was in a break-away by old knitters. Failing in that, I was prepared to adopt drastic measures to re-open the full-fashioned knitting departments. Five years of the bloodiest war in all history had infected

the whole world, especially industry. Exigency of war conditions necessitated introduction of substitutes (ersatz); likewise now in industry necessity developed substitutes, and we had a substitute for an age-old system requiring an apprenticeship of from three to five years for full-fashioned knitters.

The idea of a real training school for young knitters was thought out by me while working on our problem in my quiet office in Los Angeles. As soon as all was perfectly clear in my mind, I rushed to Fort Wayne, called the leading men of our organization together, presented the plan, and found to my joy and relief that it was enthusiastically received and approved as perfectly feasible. Committees were formed to put the plan in operation. Selection of the most eligible young men was put in charge of the employment office.

The dream of Mr. Thieme, evolved in tense waking hours in far away Los Angeles, became a reality. An apprentice training school was put into operation near the end of April, 1921. Some four or five of the knitters' foremen and two or three old knitters, who remained true to the colors, were put in charge and sportively hailed as "deans" and "professors."

At the annual stockholders meeting on June 21, Mr. Thieme gave a glowing report of its early success. He said in part:

The Apprentice School is now in full running order, and instead of making knitters in six months or a year, we are able to train knitters in from four to six weeks' time. Under this plan, we start a new class of ten every Monday morning, and each apprentice is moved along each Monday morning, until at the end of four weeks he is on a machine, and at the end of six weeks he is a knitter. We never before believed such a thing possible; and not only that, we have made first class knitters on machines in three weeks, where we had exceptionally bright, handy fellows. Not only in the W.K.M., but in Thieme Brothers Factory, where we make fine gauge, colored silks, we have young men on machines all alone, who have not been in the place four weeks yet. We have at this time about 85 machines running in both plants, and when you consider that this has all been accomplished in less than eight weeks, it is safe for us to make the statement that by the end of the year, every machine will be running with full production, and making first class goods.

Our employment department office is taking on only young men between the ages of nineteen and thirty, and selecting only such as show fitness for the work. We reject perhaps more than we accept. Among our knitters you will now find college students, high school graduates, machinists, electricians, teachers, office men, and others. The high wages, genteel work, and steady employment, with the fine treatment accorded knitters in the W.K.M. in the years gone by, are great inducements to a fine type of young men desiring to improve their condition and their earning capacity.

The strike was indeed over. In this same address, Mr. Thieme explained graphically the manner in which the mills recuperated from its effects so rapidly. He said in part:

Our Seamless Department was not seriously crippled by the strike. We were quickly able to get it in full operation, and by means of it, we kept the factory running, and we kept our contact with customers. Our salesmen have been on the road almost constantly since last December, disposing of the goods on hand, and soliciting business for seamless and children's departments. These departments have always been distinguished from the full-fashioned departments, and constitute a substantial part of our product. They have been still further increased through the strike situation.

The stockholders passed a resolution unanimously endorsing the policy of the management throughout the strike and approving the entire conduct of the business. At first the strikers laughed at the training system, but their amusement soon changed to worry. Within six months, 100 machines were being operated successfully, and in twelve months, all were in operation with production fairly standardized. The apprentices were taken readily into the Wayne Knit fold. Mr. Thieme extended impressive New Year greetings on a full cover page of *Ravlings,* January 1, 1922, which concluded as follows:

At the beginning of this New Year, we are again moving on with all the sails set—a full crew aboard, and with the captain and the officers spick and span, ready for the voyage through the year 1922. We have with us many new young men and women, who in the past year have joined the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Brothers Company, and who are for the first time hearing the WAYNE KNIT

Greeting of a happy and prosperous New Year. We hope they will become permeated with the good will and the spirit that is embodied in this greeting, and that they will shout it back to each other and to the management with the same sincerity and intensity. Let us hope that we may all be here a year from now, that we will have realized our boldest expectations for happiness, good health, and prosperity, and that peaceful relations will rest upon us.

Wishing one and all a happy and prosperous New Year, is the New Year's greeting of the management.

THEO. F. THIEME,
President.

At the next annual stockholders meeting, June 20, 1922, he said in part, speaking of this strike:

It would be useless for me to deny that it was a most sad parting with a force of 300 men, most of whom were taught their trade here, many of them men who were brought over from Germany, twenty to thirty years ago, a large number of them children of these immigrants, and many of them personal friends of myself and other officers. On the other hand, I am free to confess that my pleasure and satisfaction is great when I look into the faces of the 300 new men, ranging in age from nineteen to thirty years, who constitute our new knitters.

Our training school for knitters has been a marvel in its accomplishments. There is nothing like it in the United States, and perhaps not in the world. Through the strike the Wayne Knitting Mills has been put in the forward rank of progressive manufacturers by developing this new system of training skilled labor; also by scrapping the old system which has prevailed ever since the industry started.

In a brief written review of the history of the mills several years later, he made the following touching comment upon personal elements involved in the strike.

I passed through the most emotional and the saddest moments of my life during this struggle. To lose my valuable knitters and find them my bitter enemies, bent on having their way or destroying the Wayne Knitting Mills, was a terrible blow to my pride and my faith in humanity. On the other hand, I later experienced much satisfaction and pride in observing the opportunity I had prepared for these hundreds of new, grateful young knitters. They are local Fort Wayne citizens, who now have a highly remunerative trade and can safely look to the future with a family and a home.

That necessity is the father of invention proved true again in our case. Our new system of intensive school training for knitters startled the industry, and, I believe, mollified the arbitrary dictatorship and methods of union labor agitators. I am sure we rendered a great public service by winning the strike.

Industrial strikes, like war, are always expensive, both to the winner and the loser. But like war, they may be fruitful of ultimate beneficial results. I am certain our striking knitters felt as badly over this great misfortune of 1921 as we did; it was unnecessary, reckless, unjust, and could not have occurred without a national movement resulting from war conditions.

Now with the passing of a full generation, Mr. Thieme at the age of 84 looks back upon that hectic struggle without bitterness or regret. He sees in it the clear reflection of a natural antithesis between individual and organic relation in industry. He sees the strike now in fair retrospect as the inevitable results of world wide industrial and social conditions over which neither he nor his knitters had any control. It was in a measure the aftermath of the world war and of international industrial upheaval. Under the circumstances it was unavoidable that labor interests became solidified and that individual sentiments became submerged almost completely in group and class policies. He does not blame the knitters for standing steadily by their union principles in such a crisis. It was inevitable that the local union should obey the behests of the national federation.

He respects the sturdiness and integrity of those skilled workmen, who had been his loyal associates for so many years, and has noted with pride that they have been amply able to take care of themselves; that their skill and their thrift had made them independent. All of the older men owned good homes in Fort Wayne. Some of them had several pieces of real estate. He had always encouraged and assisted them to own their own homes.

On the other hand, he has no regret that he could not and would not yield to them. He has even reached the conclusion

that both he and they were instruments of destiny in bringing about a new and noteworthy reform, of lasting benefit both to labor and management in the great knitting industry. As a result of the strike at the Wayne Knitting Mills in 1921, the outmoded boy-helper way of making knitters is gone forever—symbolical of the eternal truth that "The old order changeth, yielding place to new."

He still enjoys personal greetings from old employees. For him, there is no more gratifying confirmation of the honesty and essential wisdom of his labor policy than communications or expressions from his employees like the following characteristic letter written him, upon the occasion of his final retirement in 1925, by a one-time union leader and former president of the local organization.

Mr. Theo. F. Thieme
My Dear Sir,

After more than 28 years of almost continuous employment with you and your associates at the Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Bros. Co., it is with regret that I witness your retirement and withdrawal from the great hosiery mills of which you were the founder. You have always been regarded as a fair-minded, conscientious, and just employer, co-operating and willing to adjust any grievances with your employees, whether group or individual. That has been the foremost reason of your success in the business. There have been times when some were misjudged and at times condemned, through misunderstanding or prejudice, when the accused was not to blame, but like after the rain, the sun shines and all is well.

Although during my service with you I have not amassed any fortune, yet I have had a generally good living. I appreciate with sincerity all you have done for me as your employee and through the Pioneer Club, which you so generously sponsored. It is with pride I can say that I was a cog in the machinery, to make possible such a great hosiery plant, which stands to your credit of untiring efforts, and I am thankful for the privilege of being one of the many.

Mr. Thieme, I wish you success, like of old in whatever your ventures may be, and hope you will always remember and think well of your old employees.

Sincerely yours,
F. D.

Chapter XII

THE MORRIS PLAN

As a thoroughgoing business man, Mr. Thieme concentrated his energy and his money upon his own business, the manufacture of hosiery. But, although he never dissipated either his interest or financial resource, he did help encourage other promising businesses in Fort Wayne and made frequent investments on a modest scale. He was not a speculator. He never made or lost a dollar in indiscriminate speculation. It is his pride that every form of business in the management of which he had a part was a success—a good go—from beginning to end.

He has derived much satisfaction from his modest share in the success of these friendly enterprises. In none of them has he found more genuine gratification than in the Morris Plan, which is made the principal subject of this general chapter on extra investments. Through it, he enjoyed for a long period and to an unusual degree, a supplementary business interest through which large numbers of people were benefited in a way that he approved very heartily.

Before proceeding to a more detailed examination of his activities in the furtherance of the Morris Plan, we may notice in passing several other supplementary interests that occupied much of his attention. As citizen and business man alike, he rejoiced in the upbuilding of Fort Wayne—the growth and success of industries, the increase of population, and the prosperity of all the people. For example, as a leading member of a special committee of the Commercial Club, he was quite influential in helping to induce the Rolling Mills to locate in Fort Wayne in 1903, as a branch of the

American Rolling Mills Company. This plant introduced a new type of industry into the city. It brought families of working men and provided a greater supply of women and girls for work in the knitting mills and other plants that gave large opportunity for female labor. Mr. Thieme became a director of the Fort Wayne Rolling Mills. Along with other farsighted industrialists, he appreciated the importance of having a well-rounded range of factories such as have made Fort Wayne the substantial, well-balanced industrial community that it is today.

He has been a director in the Wayne Tank & Pump Company, the Fort Wayne Oil and Supply Company, and the Fort Wayne Hotel Company, as well as a moderate stockholder in several other representative concerns.

As his hosiery business developed, bringing increase of purchases, sales, pay rolls, and profits, he found it advisable to form some substantial banking connections, though never in a managerial capacity. He has been a director of the Tri-State Loan & Trust Company, the First & Tri-State National Bank, the Lincoln National Bank, and the Lincoln Trust Company. In the disastrous bank crashes of a few years ago, long after his retirement from active business, he suffered the only considerable loss of his entire business career. He had become involved in banking more heavily than was his wont because of the plans he had for his son, Wayne, to enter the field of finance.

He has rather extensive stock interests in a number of leading corporations, some of which he was influential in organizing and in which he has a special pride because of their management and operation. While not active himself in any of these corporations since his retirement, he still retains his financial interests, with his son Wayne, who now represents him in these various industries as a director and officer.

As intimated in the beginning of this chapter, his connection with the Morris Plan has had such distinctive significance as to deserve special consideration. The Morris

Plan was established in Fort Wayne in 1915. Mr. Thieme was one of the founders and became the first president of the Fort Wayne Morris Plan Company, which received its charter September 13 and opened for business October 4, 1915. It was one of the first twenty-six companies established in the United States—the first in Indiana. It was a new type of bank—a bank for the individual. The idea was originated in Norfolk, Virginia, just five years before.

The new banking system that it promulgated appealed both to the humanitarian and business principles of Mr. Thieme. It specialized in loans to salary and wage workers, basing its security purely on character and earning power. It stood for investments in business honesty and reliability. This is what Mr. Thieme has always stood for. He always encouraged his employees to borrow money, if necessary for timely investments, in proportion to their certain earning power. Above all else he encouraged them to maintain rigid honesty as their highest business asset. He was well trained in this principle by his father and cherished it ever in his lifelong adherence to the Golden Rule.

He saw in the Morris Plan a definite encouragement of thrift, which he has always held to be the surest basis of business worth. As an illustration of this, one of the banks of which he was a director, published once a full page advertisement of its policies in which the photograph of Mr. Thieme was used together with the following signed statement expressing his conception of the "foundation of success":

THRIFT is the foundation of man's success in life. When a man once acquires the priceless gift of saving, he is on the road to definite accomplishment. I do not claim that every "thrifter" will become rich, but riches are not necessary to happiness. If they were, we would have few happy people. The happiest and most contented people are not the rich, but those who have learned to live within their incomes, and at the same time have laid something aside, which will often prove to be the best kind of a nerve tonic and system builder.

THEO. F. THIEME.

He saw the rare possibilities of effectively promoting this practice through the Morris Plan.

Mr. Thieme's office as president of the Morris Plan was more than an honorary position. He was ever ready with sound advice and energetic cooperation, and he shared in the steady success of this unique institution with increasing satisfaction. It was a success from the start and is still succeeding. Mr. Thieme held the active presidency for fourteen years—until five years after his retirement from active business generally.

Happily, he was able to attend with Mrs. Thieme the banquet celebrating the opening of the 25th year—the silver anniversary of the Fort Wayne Morris Plan—September 14, 1939. As an honored guest, he made the principal talk of the evening, reviewing the founding and the growth of the Plan. He said in part:

> I am proud of the Morris Plan and proud of my connection with it. Its faith is based on character. Its success depends upon honesty. It is the best financial recognition and encouragement of genuine financial worth that I have ever known. The prosperity of our Morris Plan is a fine proof of the soundness of the maxim that "honesty is the best policy."

On that occasion, Mrs. Grace D. Binder, the energetic and efficient secretary-manager, who has been a part of the business from the beginning, reviewed its financial success. She showed that the steady increase in the volume and number of loans and investment certificates of the local company had been in keeping with substantial progress of the new banking system throughout the country.

The Morris Plan has spread from coast to coast with 128 well-distributed companies. Five of these are in Indiana—Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Evansville, and South Bend. During the past ten years, notwithstanding depression and financial panics, the 128 companies have more than doubled their accumulated loan total, reaching the handsome sum of five billion dollars in 1940. Their loss record has been less than one-half of one per cent.

Mr. Thieme still enjoys frequent visits at the Morris Plan headquarters whenever he is in Fort Wayne. "His kind and genial presence," said Mrs. Binder, "and his friendly counsel are always inspiring and helpful."

Upon his retirement from the active presidency, he was presented with an elegant silver loving cup and a handsome token of formal greetings bearing the following inscription and signed personally by officers and directors.

THEODORE F. THIEME, the first President of the Fort Wayne Morris Plan Company,

THEODORE F. THIEME, the first and only Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fort Wayne Morris Plan Company.

THEODORE F. THIEME, the Father who brought into being and raised to splendid strength and impregnability the Fort Wayne Morris Plan Company

WE GREET YOU

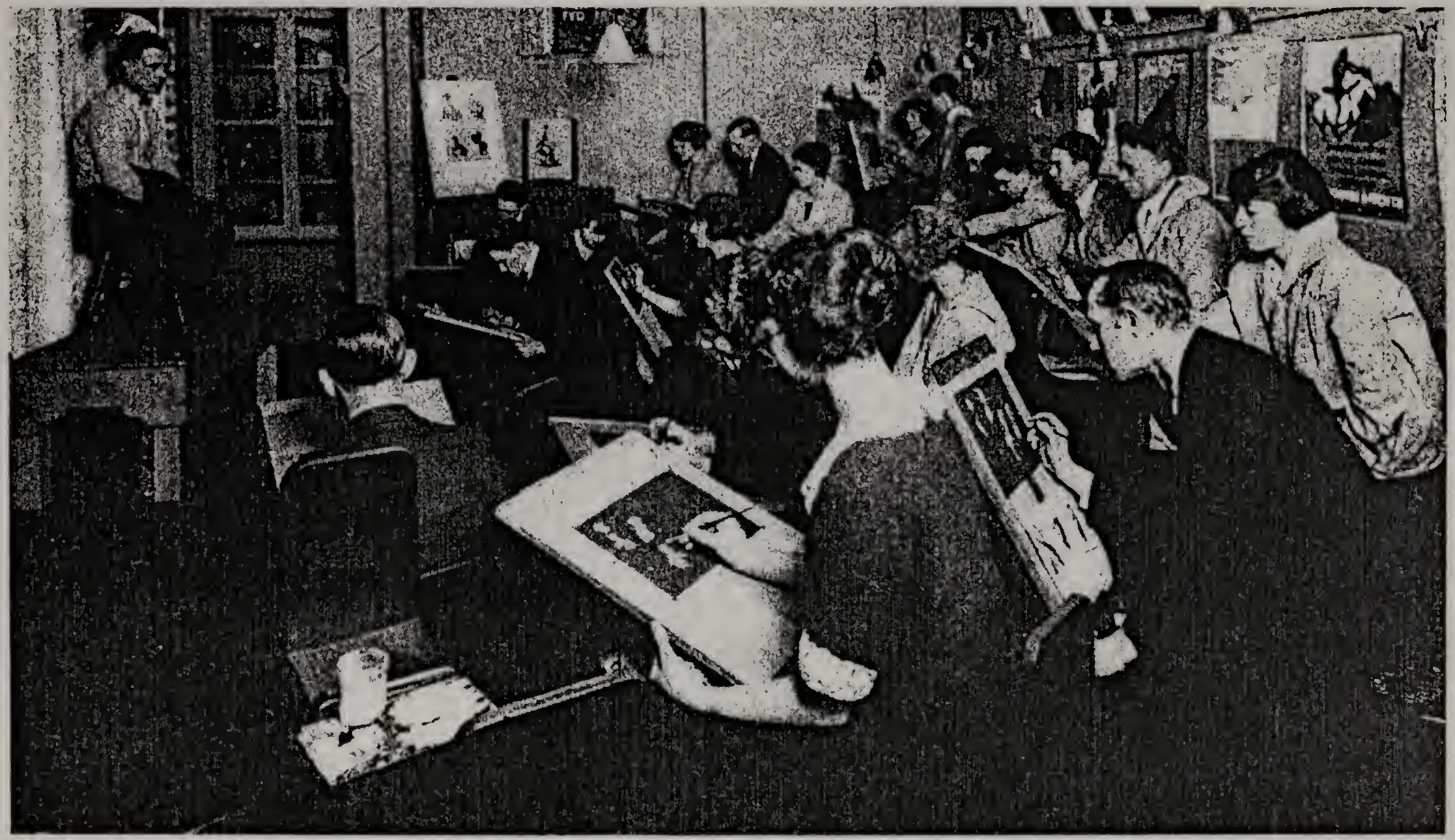
Regretfully and with a keen sense of our loss of your guidance, we accede to your urgent desire and wish to be relieved of your duties as Chairman of the Board.

Keenly conscious of your wonderful vision, your unfailing loyalty, your unstinted help in all emergencies, your safe and sound judgment, the Directors and the Officers deeply regret your decision.

BE IT RESOLVED, therefore, that the subscribers hereto, the representatives of each of the Directors and Officers, duly appointed, hereby convey to you our highest esteem, our heartfelt gratitude and our deepest respect, hoping and praying that you will long be with us and share with us in the fruits of the institution you builded and which you loved so well.

THE FORT WAYNE MORRIS PLAN COMPANY
ITS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
GREET YOU

HARRY A. PERFECT, President
MAURICE C. NIEZER, Vice President
MARTIN LUECKE, Vice President and General Counsel
WILLIAM B. MORTON, Treasurer
GRACE D. BINDER, Executive Vice President



Fort Wayne Art School Evening Class in Life Drawing.

Fort Wayne Art School and Little Theater.

Chapter XIII

THE FORT WAYNE ART SCHOOL AND MUSEUM

"All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee" is a well-known dictum of Pope's "Essay on Man." It is intended to apply to unseeing masses of humanity. But it could not be applied justly to the boy Theo Thieme, and certainly it does not fit the mature man.

From earliest youth his soul reveled in all things artistic in life and nature. His inherent love of art was akin to his love of music. His desire for travel was accentuated keenly by his wish to see the beauties of nature as exhibited in rare natural phenomena all over the world. He loved beautiful sculpture and finished architecture, as well as picturesque natural scenery. Most of all he loved painting. Although he never tried his hand seriously with brush and canvas, he made such intensive observation and study of the works of the masters as to become a genuine connoisseur of art in painting.

As his personal fortune grew and his foreign travels increased, he began making art collections. On every trip abroad, he brought back choice specimens of master paintings that he loved. His home became a modest salon of well selected pictures. He adorned the offices and the club house of the Wayne Knitting Mills with works of art and made discriminating gifts of rare pictures to relatives and friends and to public and parochial schools. There are in many homes and schools in Fort Wayne and Los Angeles today artistic emblems of his taste and generosity.

Occasionally, he favored the little Fort Wayne School of Art with a distinctive contribution. As early as 1906, he

presented this school with a fine copy of Correggio's "Reclining Magdalene" that he purchased in Dresden. He treasures the artistic note of thanks received from the devoted secretary of the school, Miss Katherine Hamilton.

My dear Mr. Thieme:

I have been instructed by the Board of Directors of the School of Art to express to you their warmest thanks for the beautiful painting you have so generously donated to the school.

Yours sincerely,
KATHERINE HAMILTON,
Secretary.

Fort Wayne,
October 18th, 1906.

This was the beginning of his extensive art collections and of his interest in the Fort Wayne School of Art. On his 1906 tour of continental Europe, he made considerable purchases of bric-a-brac and paintings in Munich. He also ordered copies of Raphael's Madonnas, and other leading paintings. The pleasure derived from the art gatherings of this 1906 tour fixed his habit from that time forth of making choice collections of paintings, one objective of every trip abroad.

His enjoyment of all national and world expositions accentuated greatly his artistic urge, and he began visiting and patronizing American studios. He was cultivating appreciation and enjoyment of art for art's sake.

Mr. Thieme was well acquainted with the conduct of leading art schools and galleries of Europe. He visited most of them many times and was impressed with the extensive endowment and governmental support for generations—and even for centuries—that had been necessary to make them what they were. Consequently, he could not feel much encouragement as to the voluntary maintenance of an art school in Fort Wayne in its earlier stages as a good country town. However, with the rapid and substantial growth of Fort Wayne, as a progressive industrial center, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, bringing great

increase in population and wealth, with proportionate advancement in education and general culture, he envisioned the hope of an art center in his own home town in keeping with its material progress.

He saw in the Fort Wayne School of Art a fine nucleus for this purpose. It had lived for a generation as an idealistic and courageous gesture of the true spirit of art culture. For several years it was maintained in the Hamilton carriage house on Lewis Street, and later moved to the modest old brick dwelling house on the northeast corner of Webster and Wayne Streets. It had been founded and supported from the beginning by a devoted group of well-known individuals and families—true lovers of art for art's sake. With limited financial backing, it had conducted from time to time modest exhibitions, lectures, recitals, and classes—keeping ever alive in the growing city the germ of artistic development, to which its faithful sponsors were zealously devoted.

Returning home from a post-war trip to the battlefields of Europe, early in 1920, Mr. Thieme resolved to attempt a timely stimulation of the development of art in America. His first-hand observation of the stricken cities and crippled industries of war-torn Europe convinced him that the development of art would be stifled there for many years. He believed that the time was opportune for America to make an original advance in the realm of art, wherein we had so long accepted guidance from old world culture. He foresaw a new era for art in industry—in designing and advertising, in jewelry, furniture, and all forms of useful decoration, as well as in cultural beauty. He considered Fort Wayne's industrial and educational progress sufficiently ripe for independent art promotion, and he looked upon the Fort Wayne School of Art as a good beginning nucleus.

After some personal overtures, he made the following formal proposal in writing on May 13, 1920:

Fort Wayne School of Art,
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Gentlemen:

In order to give definite form to my verbal proposal in connection with the gift of my residence and other property to the Fort Wayne School of Art, I submit herewith in writing my offer for your consideration.

In doing so, I desire first to present my views on an Art Institution for Fort Wayne. We at present have a city of 86,000 people and should be now, or soon, in position to support such an institution. Experience shows that artistic development is more rapid in a city depending on commerce and manufacturing, than one depending on agriculture, and Fort Wayne is fast developing into a manufacturing city. Art Schools and museums cannot be conducted without money, and financial support is the best evidence that can be had, either from a community or an individual, as to the amount of interest aroused.

I am not financially able nor inclined to shoulder alone the burden of establishing an Art School and Museum, but I am desirous of co-operating with you in testing out the sentiment of Fort Wayne toward an undertaking of this kind, with the idea of determining whether the time is ripe for putting Art on a solid foundation in our city.

I therefore connect my gift with certain conditions, which in my opinion, there should be little difficulty in meeting and which would make Fort Wayne an Art Educational Center, providing that artistic development necessary to real progress.

My proposal is as follows:

That a new organization be formed and incorporated, to be called the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum, or some similar and appropriate title.

To this new organization, I would then be willing to present the following:

1. My residence at N. E. Corner of Berry and Rockhill Streets, unfurnished, except for such articles as I may decide to leave if found suitable for Art School purposes.
2. The sum of $10,000.00, of which $5,000.00 will be payable in cash when wanted; and $5,000.00 in ten annual payments of $500.00 each.
3. Ten pictures, oil paintings and water colors.

As mentioned before, I am convinced that this gift will be of no service to the Fort Wayne Art School or the cause of Art unless addi-

tional funds and a strong organization are available. I therefore qualify my contribution with the following conditions:

1. That membership of the new organization must not be less than 200, and that through the membership dues an annual fund be raised of not less than $1,500.00, the amount charged for dues to be optional with the organization.
2. That a sum of $25,000.00 be raised and added to the General Fund, the method of raising such fund to be left with the Fort Wayne Art School.
3. That the property owned by the present Fort Wayne School of Art, at the corner of Webster and Wayne Streets, be transferred to the new Fort Wayne Art School & Museum. If such property be then sold, the proceeds must be added to the general fund of the new organization.

Sincerely yours,
THEODORE F. THIEME.

The result justified his hopes. A new association, the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum, was formed. By a well-conducted campaign, in which all Fort Wayne cooperated handsomely, a sustaining fund of $25,162.00 was raised and a membership secured far in excess of the quota. The representative character of this support is indicated by the fact that the general fund was raised by ninety-one different contributions ranging in amounts from one to five thousand dollars. The membership consisted of five classes: honorary, life, sustaining, active, and junior.

An attractive little theater was constructed as an annex to the Thieme home, and the new institution was started formally upon its career the first week in October, 1922. The opening was announced officially by a circular letter of the president, Albert H. Schaaf, to contributors and members, on September 30, 1922, in which he said in part:

The Fort Wayne Art School will open next Monday in its new home at northeast corner of Berry and Rockhill Streets. That a real need for this institution exists in Fort Wayne is demonstrated by the fact that already 59 students have enrolled, of which 12 are full-time.

The formal presentation of the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum to the general public was the occasion of a

series of unique programs, including lectures, playlets, exhibitions, receptions, and teas throughout the first week in March, 1923. The new Little Art Theater was dedicated and put into constant use immediately. The public attendance was large and the general response most gratifying. The *Journal Gazette* reported this opening in its issue of March 2, in part as follows:

> Before an audience, that filled the Little Art Theater, the first part of the splendid program arranged to celebrate the formal opening of the school took place last night. Introduced by Karl S. Bolander, director of the school, Albert H. Schaaf, president, formally presented it to the city, dedicating it "to the public and to the community."
>
> At the conclusion of the program, Mr. Schaaf read a telegram received during the day by Mr. and Mrs. Bolander from Mr. Thieme, who is at Miami Beach, Florida. By a rising vote, Mr. Schaaf was directed to send to Mr. Thieme, in reply, a telegram of appreciation for the work he did in making possible the establishment of the school.
>
> Mr. Thieme's telegram to Mr. and Mrs. Bolander follows:
>
> "The formal opening of the Art School and Museum today marks an important step in the cultural progress of Fort Wayne. It must be a proud and gratifying event for the officers, the patrons, the students, and especially yourselves to have achieved so much and already established beyond doubt the success of this undertaking. My congratulations to you. The heartiest good wishes to the art school for a long and successful life.
>
> THEO. F. THIEME."
>
> Mr. Schaaf's telegram in reply to Mr. Thieme was as follows:
>
> "The audience by a rising vote, authorizes me to convey our sincere appreciation of your splendid gift which made this happy and momentous occasion possible. The dedication of our beautiful museum and Little Art Theater was a one-hundred per cent success.
>
> ALBERT H. SCHAAF,
> President."

The school has been a real success from the start. Offering a wide variety of courses, both full time and part time, for both children and adults, it has met a wide range of need and desire. The Little Theatre, or auditorium, is in almost constant use for exhibitions, lectures, recitals, musicales,

dramas, and special assemblies, in keeping with its purposes as an integral part of a high grade art school and museum.

The management is in charge of a strong board of twenty-four governors. Mr. Thieme was awarded the complimentary office of Honorary President, which he still enjoys. In that capacity, he has had the rare pleasure of presenting the diplomas to the graduates at nearly all of the seventeen commencements that have been held from 1924 to 1940 inclusive.

He was the commencement speaker at the first graduation, June 13, 1924. Speaking on the subject, "The Road to Success," he took occasion to express his personal gratification and appreciation in a very intimate and congratulatory way. He said in part:

> That you have been diligent, enthusiastic, and skillful students, I am ready to testify. As I walked through the classrooms day after day during these two years, and watched you at work and study, I envied you the life. It was always an inspiration to me to come in here and observe the happiness and zeal in faces that seemed to me were constantly lit up by an inner purpose. I could see a devotion and love for your work that I have never witnessed before. It was work, that's true; but fascinating work, not drudgery. The words "loafing on the job," never once occurred to me. And then, those teachers, those earnest, persuasive, busy teachers! How you must love and respect them! Devotedly and patiently, they gradually unfolded to you the many mysterious and intricate methods employed to create those artistic and useful articles, of which a few samples are exhibited on these walls.
>
> The atmosphere of this school has been so inviting, cheering, and homelike as to make it unlike any other educational institution that I was ever in. This Fort Wayne Art School, with its teachers, its scholars, its officers, its achievements, and its ideals, has so far carried out the highest expectations of its promoters and friends.
>
> I am convinced that this school with its lofty and useful mission will grow and establish itself as a necessary part of our educational system. I look forward to the day when the young men and young women of Fort Wayne will be sent to this Art School as a part of their

cultural education in the same way as they are sent to colleges, finishing schools, or schools of music.

In my travels through Italy, France, Germany, England, and other countries, I learned that it was a common practice for young people to attend art schools in order to round out their cultural education, and enable them to be appreciative of the artistic and the beautiful, and to adapt it to their daily life, in the business, in the home, and in the community. It often made me feel keenly my lack of education along those lines and caused me to deplore the fact that art in general was still a closed book to the great masses of the people of this new country.

And so I hope that the small beginning made by those members of this class, who have taken art purely for its cultural benefits, will result next year and in the years to come in making this a most important department of our school. I realize that a gratifying start has already been made in our public schools among the children, giving them valuable preparatory training, with wonderful results; but to complete the work from a cultural educational standpoint, it requires students of more mature years and an institution like this wholly devoted to the study of art.

He visited the school frequently in its earlier stages, offering words of kind encouragement to students and teachers. These contacts were as enjoyable to him as they were beneficial to them. Occasionally, he brought useful gifts.

At the third commencement, June 11, 1926, he was again the commencement speaker, talking on the subject: "From Learning to Earning." He began as follows:

This is the month of June, the most beautiful month of the year, the month of flowers and school graduates. Throughout the civilized world the air is filled with song, speeches, and merrymaking of graduating classes. Millions of young men and women are being advanced from youth to manhood, taken out of the class room and playground into the office or workshop, out of the consuming class into the producing class.

The class of 1926 of this fine school can look to the future with confidence. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to congratulate you and your teachers on this splendid achievement. You have not only reflected credit on yourselves but on the teachers and on the school.

The Fort Wayne Art School is young; it has established a high reputation and confirmed the optimistic vision of its promoter. But it needs above all else the good-will, moral support, and loyal cooperation of its graduates. When you leave these stirring, parting days behind, do not sever your connections completely. Remain a part of the school; visit it frequently; say a good word at every opportunity.

In this address, as in his first commencement address two years before, Mr. Thieme made many quaint and wholesome observations upon the problems of life in their relation to working, learning, and earning, drawing largely upon his own rich and varied experiences. There was a fine class of seventeen graduates. At an alumni dinner, attended by nearly all former graduates, a permanent alumni association was formed.

He kept a watchful eye upon the financial status of the school during its early years and was ever ready with advice and help. On January 17, 1927, he proposed a timely plan of better financing, in a formal communication to the board of governors.

Reverting to the original proposal on which the permanent success of the school depended—namely a regularly supporting membership—he offered a special, annual contribution for three years, conditioned on a new three-year membership quota that would guarantee income sufficient to cover regular budget requirements.

These suggestions were put into effect with the result that the budget was balanced and the school placed on a more substantial financial basis.

A significant recognition came in 1929 when the school city of Fort Wayne joined in the financial support of the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum. By resolution of the Board of Directors on August 12, 1929, the Art School accepted formally the provisions of an act of the Indiana Legislature of 1915, amended in 1929, empowering boards of school commissioners under specified conditions to extend financial aid to one art association. In order to be eligible

for such financial aid, the directors of the art school were required to grant to the school city certain rights to the management of the art school and certain privileges and services to the children of the city schools and to the people of the city as a regular part of the educational program. All such requirements were met and the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum became thereby officially integrated with the civic as well as the cultural life of Fort Wayne. Both the school and civil city are extending cordial co-operation, and each is represented by two members on the board of directors. Under the spirited leadership of Superintendent Merle J. Abbett, the city schools have worked hand in hand with the art school for the promotion of genuine art culture on an educational basis, not only in Fort Wayne but throughout the surrounding region.

This fine public integration has been most gratifying to Mr. Thieme. It is the substantial realization of his hope for public support and public benefit. The relationship thus established was expressed graciously by Superintendent Abbett:

> The Fort Wayne Art School is one of our very important institutions in the cultural life and growth of our young citizens. It is the result of the vision, thoughtfulness, and interest of Mr. Theodore Thieme.
>
> In the various difficult situations which it faced at the time of its beginning and many times since its advent, he has very helpfully guided its progress. The interest on the part of the School City and Civil City was stimulated by Mr. Thieme, and as a result, sufficient funds have been available to maintain it. It has been a privilege for many of the children while in the schools of Fort Wayne to develop under the guidance of excellent teachers. It offers added opportunity to those who when graduated have no chance to pursue an advanced course in Art. The commercial opportunities have been greatly extended and many institutions have found a place for graduates from this school.

An enlightening explanation of just how the money which the city contributes is used was made on December 3, 1940, in an official statement of Walter H. McBride, who has been

the successful director of the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum since 1933. He said, in part:

In return for this money the Art School and Museum gives scholarships to the public and parochial grade and high schools, good for free tuition in the art school. These awards amount to 16 for the grade schools and 14 for the high schools, good for our Saturday children's classes, and 9 for high school graduates entering our day school. The cash value of these scholarships amounts to $1,344. Free admission and lectures are offered to all of the city school children and teachers, and many schools take advantage of this opportunity by coming in groups to visit the exhibits. Teachers in our public schools are given a fifty per cent discount on tuition in any of our regular classes.

Today the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum is proceeding on a sound financial, as well as a thoroughly standardized, basis. It derives support from three sources, each of them contributing about one-third of its income. These are (1) tuition from students, (2) membership dues from members of the association, and (3) the tax allocation from the school city. With each passing year, Mr. Thieme enjoys increasing satisfaction from this co-operative work. He visits the school frequently during all the time he spends in his Fort Wayne home and makes occasional contributions of works of art together with special prizes for individual merit manifested by outstanding students. He attends the commencement programs and relishes the good cheer of the Alumni Association banquets. It is pleasing to him that his son, Wayne Loring Thieme, is taking a growing interest in the Art School and is at this time its wide-awake president.

Both father and son rejoice in all the happy associations connected with the old home on the corner of West Berry and Rockhill, in which Wayne was born and which is now the home of this successful art association. Its adaptation to its present uses was well set forth in the Fort Wayne *News*, March 5, 1923, in part, as follows:

Remodeled, redecorated, relighted, and fairly reincarnated, the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum is making its bow to the community. At last, a well-equipped modern art school stands now where only a

handsome residence stood before at the corner of Berry and Rockhill streets.

Director McBride in his official communication, quoted above, adds this gracious comment:

> Mr. Thieme's art interest has not been just for his personal enjoyment of objects of art; most important is his unselfish interest in providing a civic art center for the children and adults of Fort Wayne. From the start he has been willing and ready to give not only pictures and money but a great deal of his time and thought toward the development of such a center. His point of view that the city and public match his gifts is a splendid example of a perfect museum donor. In this way the public not only appreciates what the donor has done, but takes a greater pride in the civic organization.

As this book goes to press, the pleasing information comes that James Montgomery Hamilton, a descendant of the pioneer Hamilton family in Fort Wayne, who died in Cleveland, Ohio, January 12, 1941, has left a very substantial bequest to the Fort Wayne Art School and Museum. The bequest consists of a collection of pictures and statues, together with one-half of his residuary estate, estimated at about $150,000.

Commenting upon this generous bequest, Mr. Thieme said: "It will be a blessing to the Art School and to Fort Wayne. Mr. Hamilton is a cousin of Miss Katherine Hamilton, whom I have always looked upon as having been the real original art school promoter many years ago."

Chapter XIV

FAREWELL TO INDUSTRY

At the age of sixty-six, the time had arrived in the nature of things for Mr. Thieme to begin preparations for his retirement from the active conduct of Wayne Knitting Mills and Thieme Brothers Company. For thirty-three years —1890-1923, just half of his busy life—he had guided and controlled the destiny of the pioneer hosiery plant of which he was the founder. The time had come to provide for a succession.

He considered the subject earnestly and had much discussion with associates, giving consideration to various plans which included the finding of an experienced and qualified man for manager and also a proposal to sell the plant. Almost over night, Mr. Thieme found a new and simple solution which he put in the form of a proposal to his board of directors. He would retire as president within a year, and begin at once to organize his leading factory officers into a *committee of management* as a preliminary step toward selecting and training men for the various official duties. This plan contemplated retaining the policies and conserving the plant as a Fort Wayne institution.

The leading men selected had begun their careers with the mills at the age of thirteen to fifteen in the very first years of the factory's existence. They had been under Mr. Thieme's direct training, beginning with the lowest positions, and had risen to the highest offices in the plant. During the remaining year that Mr. Thieme would spend in his official capacity, he proposed to devote his time actively to the task of ironing out all the wrinkles that might arise in

putting the business in charge of this committee of management. And after that he would remain another year as adviser and arbiter.

The business at that time was at the height of prosperity and was looked upon very generally as the leader of the hosiery industry in this country. Mr. Thieme's working conditions with all employees, as well as with the board of directors, were perfectly harmonious. WAYNE KNIT HOSIERY was securely established with leading merchants in every city of consequence in the United States. It is not surprising that in the course of this development an organization had been built up within the factory that could be made the basis of the new management.

There was not to be found anywhere a more thoroughly organized and better trained factory organization than the Wayne Knit Textile Industrial Club. As explained in an earlier chapter, Mr. Thieme had organized this club nearly twenty years previously as a part of his "profit sharing plan." It was made up of factory officers, overseers, and heads of departments. He took over personally the training of all members and directed its plan of operation from the beginning. During those twenty years, he had made it a point to attend all regular weekly meetings of the organization when in the city. This club constituted perhaps the most valuable single asset of the mills. It carried out his orders faithfully at all times, with each member taking an active personal interest in the factory as a whole. Indeed much of the successful operation of his great industrial plant was properly attributed to the fine co-operation of the Textile Club. Mr. Thieme had the utmost confidence in the ability of the individual members and in the capacity of the organization as a whole to take over this new management. The plan was approved by the directors and enthusiastically received by the organization.

Mr. Thieme promptly laid out the new plan in full detail, selecting the men for their respective positions, and putting it into operation. He stayed with it two or three

months and was so thoroughly pleased with its perfectly satisfactory development that he then left Fort Wayne for a couple of months in Florida in order to give the organization a free hand to operate under its own initiative.

For some time Mr. Thieme had been aware of certain underhanded work by a small group of directors, men whom he had invited into the Board, and were looked upon as outsiders. They were not employed in the factory as were the remaining majority members of the board. For years they had been watching for a chance to get control of the business. During Mr. Thieme's absence, a conspiracy was entered into to sell the business to a buyer who seemed desperately determined to get the plant. By means of misrepresentation, falsification, fraud, and other questionable methods, some stockholders were induced to sell their stock direct or under option, or to transfer their voting rights. With the active assistance and co-operation of the purchasers and their bankers, a controlling interest of the capital stock was secured by them in a short time and in complete secrecy. The proceedings were conducted so secretly, that when the news finally reached the members of the factory organization and Mr. Thieme, it was too late to interfere. The Wayne Knitting Mills was sold to the Munsingwear Corporation of Minneapolis, Minnesota, in April, 1923. Thieme Brothers Company was not included in the deal.

In order to bring pressure on Mr. Thieme and protect the conspirators from criticism, a smoke screen was thrown out in the nature of a newspaper attack on Mr. Thieme, personally—his management, his profit sharing plan, his organization, and so forth, which he characterized as a sample of hocus-pocus deception, rarely exceeded. There was also developed a scheme to blackmail him by accusing him of misappropriation of funds; but prompt legal action on his part quickly forced his adversaries to drop this procedure. He sent out several long letters to stockholders and to the factory people in general, besides making some public

statements in the Fort Wayne papers. The best firms of auditors of national reputation were employed to examine the books of the company. He brought lawsuits against the conspirators both in the state and federal courts. Several suits by stockholders were brought against individual conspirators for having misrepresented the facts, as to the value of the stock, when inducing them to sell. The attack by the conspirators against the factory system of determining federal taxes brought a number of the government's tax experts to the factory, where they spent several months going over the records, almost from the very beginning of the business.

When all reports from auditors, tax experts, etc., were completed, it was found that Mr. Thieme's personal record and the record of the factory's bookkeeping had been absolutely correct throughout all these years. With himself and the factory thus fully vindicated, Mr. Thieme wrote out the full story of this deplorable incident in a twelve-page pamphlet, entitled "How And Why The Wayne Knitting Mills Was Sold." It received general distribution and was the final chapter in Mr. Thieme's parting from the industry which he had established a third of a century before, and which had been a great source of pride and profit to the city of Fort Wayne as a whole—to many thousand of its citizens as well as to him personally.

Looking back upon all this now after eighteen years have passed, Mr. Thieme desires only that the exact facts as set out in full and authentic detail in his widely distributed pamphlet should be known by anyone who is interested in understanding the inside of that conspiracy. It cannot be elaborated adequately here without using names and incidents that have no place in this historical biography.

Commenting upon it finally, as Mr. Thieme sees it today, he says:

> That pamphlet reveals the details of how the secret conspiracy was organized and operated, how it was promoted and engineered all the way through by two men—one representing buyer, the other seller.

Each had a small group of handy men and assistants who did the nasty work and the shouting. Not a man of them had been in the original promotion nor in the building up of the W. K. M.; and, with one exception no man had been inside of the factory buildings more than a half dozen times in the thirty-three years of its existence. They knew nothing whatever of the business, excepting what it brought them financially. It was such men who had the impudence to put over the inexcusably crazy plan to sell this great complicated bee-hive of industry and load it on to men who knew even less of the business.

There was not a hosiery man in the whole outfit. All sense of responsibility, of the rights and privileges accruing to myself and the organization, all regard for the rights of the stockholders and employees,—all and everybody—were ignored in this wild scramble to get possession of a "gold mine." No more disgraceful and insanely reckless performance could be imagined.

The pamphlet shows how the money was scattered among the participants and explains the nature of the law suits brought by defrauded stockholders, and by myself, making a general expose of the complete "racket." It describes the corrupt methods employed, including bribery, gross lying and misrepresentation, blackmail and threats. Summed up, it revealed a money-mad rabble and a wild racket for loot—nothing more or less. NO ANSWER OR DENIAL TO THESE ACCUSATIONS AND REVELATIONS WAS EVER MADE.

Concerning the effect of this sale upon the Wayne Knitting Mills, he adds:

Soon after the new owners took possession of the property, the leading members of the factory organization resigned. The inevitable soon happened. The inexperienced, dumbfounded new owners found themselves in possession of a business so large and complicated, and so foreign to everything they had imagined, that the folly of their venture was apparent to all. During the following years they struggled along under the most colossal difficulties. The number of employees dwindled from 2500 to less than 1000.

During their worries and recriminations, the two promoters—the original buyer and seller — died. Their reckless and dishonorable appropriation of other people's property brought them only disaster and much suffering.

He takes pleasure in this following last observation:

A reorganization of the business was finally effected and an experienced management installed. I am most happy to know that the

industry that I had such pride in promoting and developing into the greatest hosiery plant of the country is now in the hands of men who, I feel assured, will bring it back to the old high standard it formerly occupied. It has been in existence fifty years—since 1891—and my fondest hope is that it will be alive and leading the hosiery business in the year 1991, fifty years from now.

On June 19, 1923, Mr. Thieme took formal and official leave of the Wayne Knitting Mills at his last annual meeting with the stockholders as their president and manager. On the day before, he addressed his last annual letter to both present and former stockholders, in the form of a farewell message. It began with these words:

Before severing my connection with the Wayne Knitting Mills, on the date of the annual meeting June 19, I am addressing this farewell letter to the stockholders. Regretfully, I announce that my retirement, after thirty-three years of service, is not taking place under such peaceful and happy surroundings as I had long anticipated, and to which I felt myself entitled.

Although his retirement from his great industry had not come in the way he had chosen, it came at the time he had chosen. His great work was done. His employees gave him a touching farewell that was expressed most graciously through the Textile Club and the Pioneer Club.

The Textile Club gave a farewell banquet in his honor at the Fort Wayne Country Club, June 15. There were music and feasting and some very inspiring talks. Nearly all of the sixty-eight members were present. Several of them had attended the Founder's Dinner at which he had formed the club twenty years before. He was presented with an address of appreciation and esteem, engraved in a sheepskin bound volume, signed by each member of the club. The address in part is as follows:

We have found you in all relations everything we could expect, more than in reason our merits could justly claim. Your attitude as a superior to his subordinates has been the utmost of courtesy and respect, of consideration and sympathy. Your treatment of us, for whose conduct and performance in the service of the mills you were

responsible, has been high-minded and generous. Your recognition of what we have tried to do in our duty for the advancement of the business has been always prompt and wholehearted. Your concern for our well-being and prosperity ever has been a solicitude which stood second only to the welfare of this great enterprise itself. Your policies and conduct as an employer have had a quality of justice to which nothing was wanting. Your sentiments toward us as men and women have had all the frankness and sincerity of a work fellow and friend, ready on all occasions to recognize and to reward such merit and fidelity as any of us may have shown.

You have opened to us many opportunities. You have inspired us with confidence to accept, and strength to discharge greater responsibilities.

Even more touching and intimate was the farewell given in his honor in the form of an annual picnic of the Pioneer Club on the grounds of his country home the next day. All of these pioneers had been with him more than twenty years—some of them, more than thirty years. The day was spent stressing the binding ties of old associations and recalling many happenings of the years they had spent together in the development of the great industry, of which all felt themselves to be a part.

As a remembrance of the occasion, a bound book, containing an expression of friendship and esteem, was presented to him. This gracious expression, signed by every member, reads in part, as follows:

Upon the approach of your retirement as president and general manager of the Wayne Knitting Mills, the members of the Pioneer Club, who have worked with you for 20 years, and some for a period of 30 years, join in expressing our personal esteem for you and our sincerest appreciation of what this length of service has meant to us individually.

A good employer is one of the noblest handiworks of God, but you not only have been a good employer, but also a true friend and confidant. You have ever been solicitous of our success and growth, as well as of our contentment, health, and family welfare. You have assisted us in home building and in the fuller enjoyment of living. Our contact with you has been filled with milestones of personal sym-

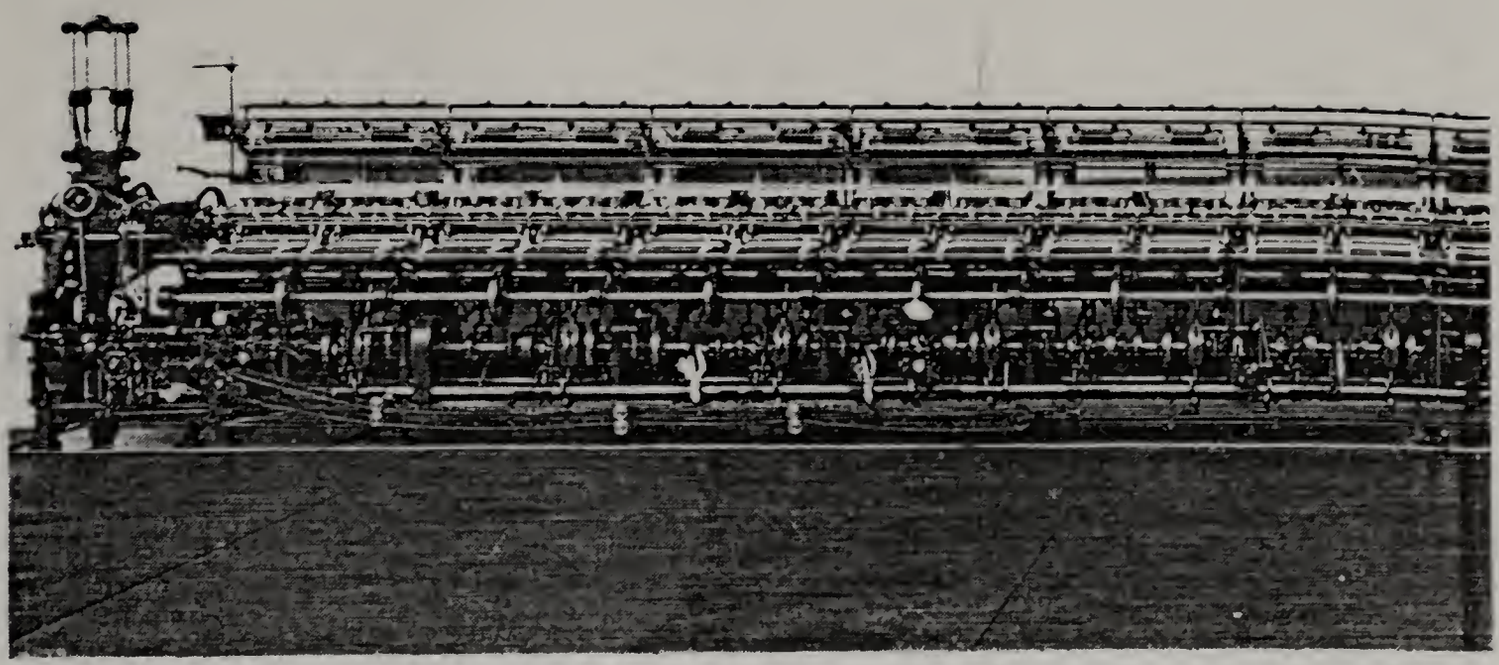
pathy, shown on numerous occasions in our bereavements and pleasures, during the long period of our friendship for each other.

Although this was really the beginning of his well-earned retirement, yet he could not retire immediately. The silk mill, Thieme Brothers Company, of which he owned or controlled the major stock, was still in his charge. "It was merely the tail to the kite," he said, speaking of it later. "When the Wayne Knitting Mills was sold, I was confronted with the task of making a kite of it." A reorganization was effected immediately, and it continued in operation as an independent manufacturing company with himself as president and general manager.

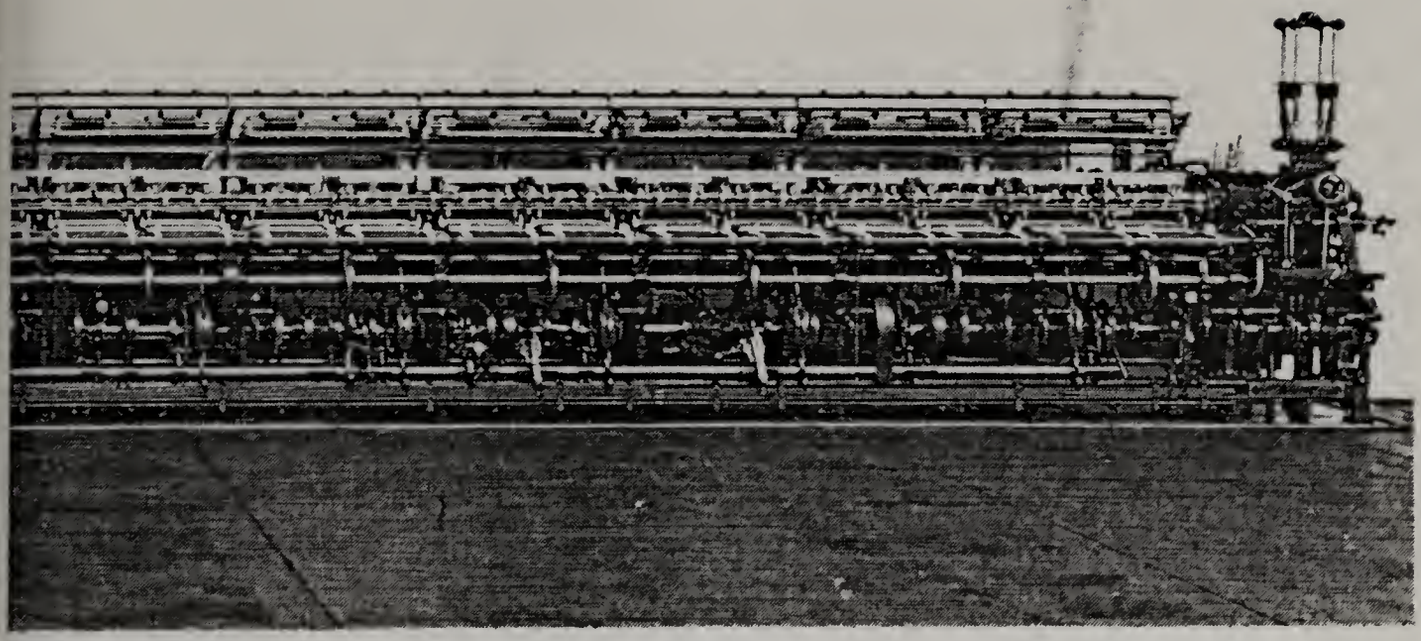
In the meantime, a number of the leading department heads and foremen of the Wayne Knitting Mills resigned their positions under the new ownership. With that situation before him, Mr. Thieme decided to put into effect his already well worked out plans to establish a hosiery plant in California. He made out a list of members of his old Wayne Knit organization whom he wished to join him and assembled them for a social evening in his home. The group included those who had resigned their positions along with some others still working. He explained his plan and invited them to join him. There was a lengthy discussion and much enthusiasm. So he prepared a prospectus, showing plan of organization, purpose and capitalization, with other full details of the proposed California venture. This was approved and accepted unanimously at another meeting in his home a few days later. Thus the Theme Hosiery Company of Los Angeles sprang into being.

Mr. Thieme's prospectus was used as the basis for newspaper announcements, notices of stock sale, and general publicity for the new organization. He gave it the name Theme Hosiery Company, to preserve for it the prestige of well established hosiery tradition attaching to the name of Thieme, and to distinguish it from the Thieme Brothers Company of Fort Wayne. Under his experienced direction, incorporation papers were signed, stock subscription lists

An early knitting machine as used about 300 years ago.



Modern Full Fashioned

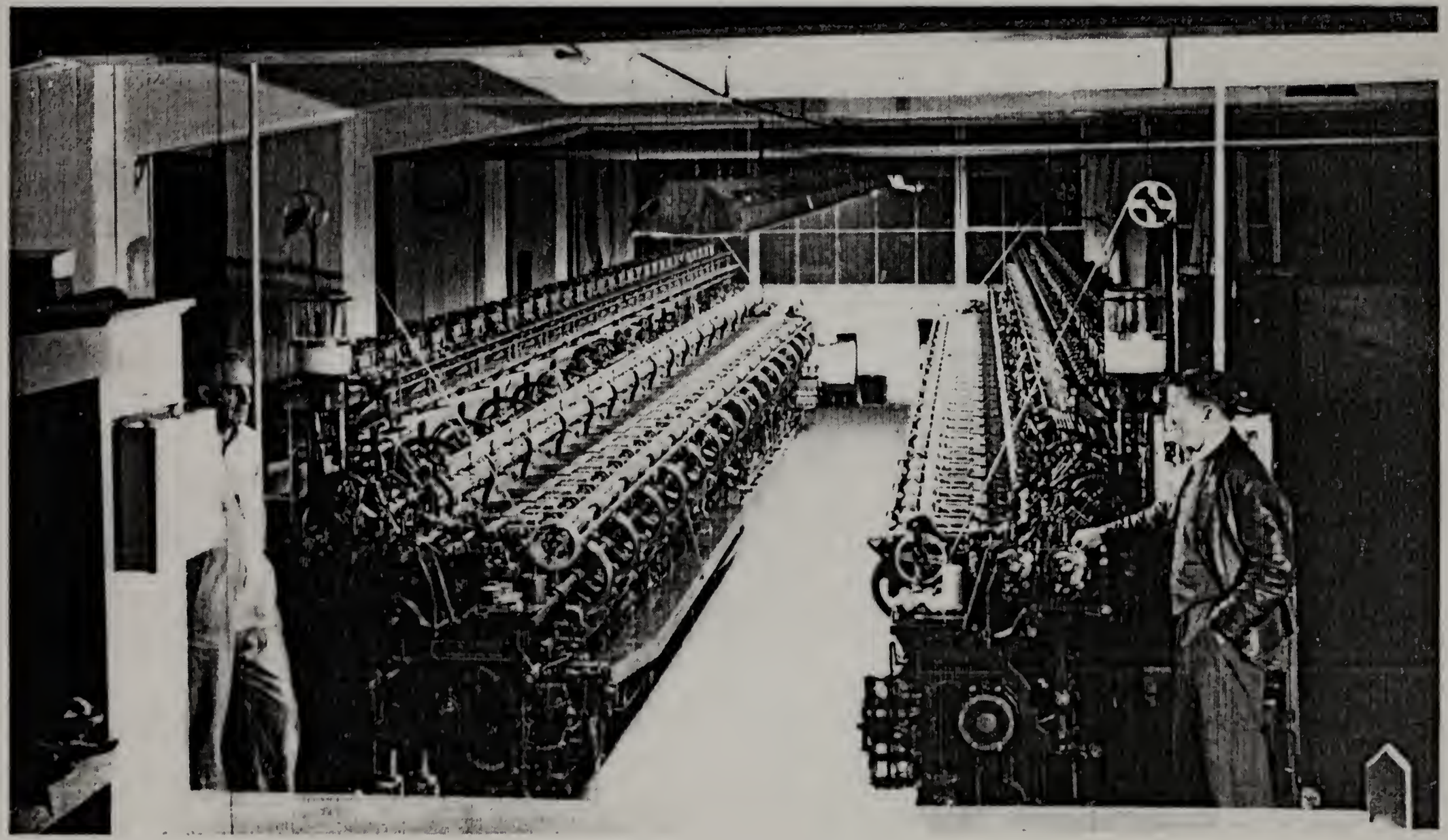


Knitting Machine.

THEME HOSIERY CO.

LOS ANGELES

1925



Latest Full Fashioned Knitting Machines. Each unit knits 30 stockings in one operation, is 53 feet long, and weighs about 34,000 pounds. Courtesy Theme Hosiery Co., Los Angeles, California.

filled out, and officers elected. He subscribed for a substantial block of stock and accepted the presidency of the company, with the major responsibility of guiding the young industry through its beginning stages along financial, manufacturing, and marketing lines. The reputation he had acquired through thirty-three years of unparalleled success as the founder of full-fashioned hosiery manufacturing in America was an invaluable asset. He also extended substantial aid in selling the first product through a co-operative marketing arrangement with Thieme Brothers Company of Fort Wayne.

In a news announcement of the launching of the new company, the *Journal Gazette* in its issue of May 12, 1923, quoted Mr. Thieme in part as follows:

> I am not going actively into business again. Let there be no misunderstanding about that. I am no longer young; in fact, I am getting well along. Years ago I had rather planned to get the heavy harness off my shoulders before this, but matters never seemed to turn out so that I felt I ought to do so.
>
> But the younger men are going to launch it and are going to run it. There are no men in the country better able to do that. Making and selling high-grade hosiery has been their life work. They know the work thoroughly. They have only to keep right on doing the things they have learned to do to make the enterprise a success. I have no doubt of the result.
>
> The Thieme Brothers Company of Fort Wayne, and the Theme Hosiery Company of California will have close working relations. I will be president of both companies. Each concern is going to have the benefit of the other's splendid business and manufacturing organization. The Thieme Brothers Company of Fort Wayne was a success from the start. I look for a similar success in the case of the new company.

All his hopes were realized. The Theme Hosiery Company, thus established in 1923-1924, has been a success from the very beginning, and now enjoys the distinction of being the pioneer silk hosiery plant of the West. Although Mr. Thieme no longer assumes any responsibility in its management, he still retains substantial financial interest in it

and feels a parental pride in its successful operation by its capable managers and principal employees, most of whom he had trained from early childhood.

Thieme Brothers Company of Fort Wayne continued operation successfully for two years longer. In April of 1925, Mr. Thieme took advantage of a favorable opportunity to sell the plant. Many forces were operating to bring about this saddest of all farewells for him. He considers Theme Hosiery Company of Los Angeles a worthy successor, enabling him to carry out his retirement.

And so in 1925, at the age of 68, Theodore F. Thieme came to the end of the road, as a captain of industry. His situation was summed up well in a feature article of the *Journal Gazette,* April 23, 1925, written by Frank Roberts.

Starting with the touching sentiment, "It's a sad thing to come to the end of a road," it continued in part as follows:

> Theodore F. Thieme, founder of the textile industry in Fort Wayne and pioneer full-fashioned hosiery manufacturer in the United States, looked from the window of his office at the red brick walls of Thieme Bros. Co. He looked across the street at other red brick walls of the Wayne Knitting Mills. He looked down the canyon of a street which ran between these walls.
>
> Within those buildings he knew, from years of intimate experience, was the hum of machinery, skilled fingers of young girls in the heyday of life and vigor, managers and executives who understood every turn of the machinery, every movement of deft fingers. Thieme had laid—not with his hands, but with his brain—every brick in those red walls. He had seen the machinery evolve from crude beginnings to the ease and speed of summer lightning. He had watched the girls come and go and had been interested in their development and their problems. He had trained the executives until they saw his vision, mind to mind and eye to eye. It was creator in creation. For 33 years he had breathed the breath of life into these two industries.

Here the thoughtful journalist grew philosophical as well as reminiscent:

> Time, which changes all things under the sun, had wrought changes here. Yesterday he had sold the last of his two plants. Tomorrow a

new master would take up the silken thread of the hosiery industry where he dropped it and would go on weaving through the years. So Thieme mused as he saw the industries of his brain, leaving, as it were, the parental roof forever.

"As I look back over my business career I feel that it has been full and eventful," Mr. Thieme said. "I have enjoyed it. I worked hard and I played just as hard."

Business does have a soul. Mr. Thieme thought so yesterday as he walked again to the window to look at the factories which had been his own. No one might measure the affection with which he viewed the red brick walls and the canyon of a street between. No one could measure the strength of his vital years he had put into the factory and the organization.

"It's a sad thing to come to the end of a road."

In an editorial of the same issue, entitled "Pioneer Name Taken Down," Fort Wayne expressed a kind farewell to its own captain of industry together with its appreciation of his achievements:

To Theodore F. Thieme this country is indebted for the immense development of industry in the manufacture of full-fashioned hosiery.

To Theodore F. Thieme Fort Wayne is indebted that it has such an industry at all.

So long as these great hosiery mills, founded and developed by Theodore F. Thieme, remain a part of the industrial life and general prosperity of Fort Wayne, the name of the man who created them will live in the appreciative memory of Fort Wayne's people. He has done great things for the advancement of this city and the spread of its fame to the far corners.

Chapter XV

RETIREMENT

"Thieme at the end of one Road, strikes out into broader one." Such is the suggestive headline of the feature article on Theodore F. Thieme's farewell as a captain of industry, quoted at the close of the preceding chapter. How literally true it was no one could know, except Mr. Thieme, and perhaps even he did not realize then its full import. He was actually striking out upon a road as broad as the universe—if the pathway of mind and spirit can be called a road. He is still upon that broad highway, at the age of eighty-four, after sixteen years of uninterrupted wayfaring at his will. It is a road unrestricted by right of way or terminus. In peaceful retirement, he has followed it to far corners of the globe; and it is still leading him into the innermost recesses of mind and the uttermost realms of spirit.

Always an ardent traveler, it was natural that he would take prompt advantage of the freedom of retirement to indulge this inclination more freely than he had ever done. Relieved of all business cares, with health and fortune secure at the age of sixty-eight, he was again—and more so even than in his first European visit nearly fifty years before—literally foot-loose and fancy free. In the decade from 1925 to 1935 he crossed the Atlantic twenty times and also traversed other seas and touched distant shores. This has been chronicled briefly in the chapter on "Travel" and need not be detailed here. However, it is worthy of emphasis that although he had visited many of those world ports in former years, while mingling travel with business, he en-

joyed new wonders in all of them in these later days of his care-free retirement, when his mind was absorbed wholly with the joys of travel. Mrs. Thieme accompanied him on most of these joyous pilgrimages. Their tour around the world in 1929 was the high point of their experience in world travel.

Although he has ceased his foreign wanderings since 1935, his mind still revels in all the world wonders that he has enjoyed so intimately. His memory still retains them vividly and if he wishes to refresh his memory more fully at any time, he has ready access to the systematic records and exhibits he has kept in the form of log books, diaries, souvenirs, and picture albums of important cities and places in the world. He also has a large collection of moneys of different realms accumulated through the years.

Although he has not seen any of his cherished Old World points of interest for six years, he is keeping in more vivid touch with them than ever before because of daily reports of the extraordinary events that are occurring there in the World War now in progress. Having traveled in all the leading countries involved, both before and after the first World War, he has learned to know the people, their history, their manner of living, their economic and political problems, and their relations with their neighbors. This brings the present war, its movements and underlying causes, clearly before him. The whole world situation, including the increasingly energetic activities of the United States in international affairs, becomes to him an intensely interesting development from day to day.

Although he does not feel inclined to talk much upon these grave international topics, yet occasionally in thoughtful company, he expresses himself very freely concerning them. Recently he said:

> Playing for the world's highest stakes of power, lands, and wealth, a very few individuals in a combine with minority racial groups, as I view the situation, have it in their power to commandeer the lives of millions of the young manhood of the world. They control the

welfare and even the lives of millions of peacefully inclined people, disrupt their progress, achievements, culture, their homes and religion, and civilization itself. And no man or men can stop them, and no God or Gods will intervene. When it is all over, no matter who the winner or loser, the seeds will have been sown for the next war. Here is food for thought for sane, thinking people.

Ruminating further along this line, he added the following significant comment:

I sometimes wonder whether it is a privilege or a penalty inflicted upon me, to have the closing days of my old age witness the world's greatest calamity. However, I find myself provided with plenty of excitement and incentive for the study of history as I realize that similar men, similar minority groups, similar objectives have been involved in wars that have come and gone. The thought keeps recurring to me that what happens today has happened before. One thing we do know; human nature has not changed any. Wars are still fought for selfish ends—wealth, power, land, control of commerce.

And so out of a full store of knowledge of the past, he brings rich reflections to his deep musings today.

Although his active mind is still occupied principally with present-day affairs, yet it is quite natural that this eighty-four year old thinker and observer should indulge in much retrospection, with a wide range of emotional content, from the dynamic and serious to the pleasing and amusing. Like anyone else looking back over a long life, Mr. Thieme recalls several times when the thread of his existence came very near being snapped. He remembers three incidents, each of which was at the time a near tragedy. He said: "Perhaps I should call these Nature's three attempts to give me an ascension."

Here is the first, as he related it:

During the first trip to Europe in 1878, I went with some friends for a plunge in a lake near Dresden, fed by ice-cold mountain springs. In the middle of the lake, I was overcome by cramps, but managed to call for help before going down. A companion with some assistance rescued me, and I soon recovered consciousness. But I had experienced, while going down, a phenomenon often recorded by others; my whole life passed before me, like a panorama. I have often marveled

over this phenomenon, especially as the drowning impressions remained distinct for years. Consciousness was submerged no longer than one or two minutes; yet some unknown action summarized my life's history, threw it upon an unknown screen of my brain, and left an impression of it that remained after consciousness returned. Could there be a chamber of the brain where life's activities are stored and later released under certain circumstances?

In 1901, Mr. Thieme came very near losing his life a second time. He was in the habit then of making afternoon drives in a Stanhope buggy with Mrs. Thieme and his little son, Wayne. On one of these trips, the horse, a fast trotter named Kitty, shied and bolted at the sight of a rope dragging on the ground. The occupants of the buggy were spilled out but not hurt. Later, the same thing was repeated with near-fatal results. Frightened in a similar way, Kitty straddled herself on a rail fence long enough to allow Mrs. Thieme and Wayne to get away. As Mr. Thieme jumped from the buggy, his feet became entangled in the lines, and he was dragged several hundred feet down the road by the runaway horse. Luckily, his foot came free before any really serious injury was sustained although he was left lying in the road stunned and badly bruised. Kitty was disposed of but continued her skittish ways. She passed back into the hands of the liveryman, who was injured in a tilt similar to Mr. Thieme's. After Kitty had repeated her performance with a sporty gentleman of the town, she was finally teamed with an old plug to pull a heavy truck. Mr. Thieme's horse and buggy days were over; he bought his first automobile in 1902—a single lunger runabout. He has never had an auto accident or a wreck on train or ship.

In a third scrape with destiny, Mr. Thieme suffered a sudden attack of indigestion in which he nearly died in convulsions. It was one of his rare illnesses. He writes:

I then felt convinced that as I had had three sound warnings from nature, the next one would succeed. I have been waiting in a certain dread for number four and have often thought it had arrived; but at

eighty-four, I am still waiting. In the end, it's the mystery of life and death we can't understand.

Such incidents as these naturally lead to reflections upon the thinness of the partition that separates life from death. Indeed, as the years have lessened Mr. Thieme's activity in worldly matters, his inquisitive mind has been attracted more and more to broad questions of philosophy and religion. With all his intensely practical grip on the hard realities of an industrial world where he has played a commanding part, he has nevertheless kept up an eager interest in the quest for ultimate religious and philosophical truths. He does not, of course, pretend to be a professional philosopher. But he has read widely and—better still—thought deeply and has evolved a philosophy that is his own. A few random expressions from his letters and informal talks will suffice to illustrate his interest in religious and philosophical questions.

Reared in a devoutly Protestant religious home, and for years a church member, he has never adhered religiously to any sectarian doctrine. Perhaps no better expressions of the views he holds today on religious questions can be found than those contained in a letter written (but not sent) to a sister some few years ago. He wrote in part:

Under no circumstances do I want to enter into an argument on religion, as such, but I will present a few broad observations on the subject that perhaps had not occurred to you, and I hope will be the means of quieting the worries about my future life when I must depart hence.

Although this letter was intended apparently as a personal communication to his sister, he took the opportunity to go rather broadly into the subject of world religions. After an examination into the distribution of the world religions and the number of adherents for each, he concluded:

I believe you will agree that all peoples on earth, no matter what their religion, are children of God. They are the product of his plan of the Universe. In my opinion, founded upon much thinking and reading

of the world's history, the human mind is such that humanity needs a God. Voltaire has said: "If there were no God it would be necessary to invent one."

At this point, he introduced a phase of the subject that would probably have shocked the devout sister. This may have been the reason why he did not send her the letter:

Broadly speaking, religions have caused more wars, more inhumanity and cruelty among mankind than all other activities and largely because of intolerance. When I read ancient history and the history of Europe since Christ, I am prompted to do much thinking on the subject of the value of religion. However, I am satisfied now, and I believe it is agreed generally, that the benefits of religion in the way of comfort and a haven of refuge for mankind outweigh the crimes of religion.

Here the letter becomes personal in the expression of his religious belief.

I am not an Atheist, but broadly speaking an Agnostic—An unbeliever, in the sense of not believing in the miraculous, mysterious and the mythical of any religion. The question of a God, who He is, what He is like, is beyond the human mind to imagine. There are millions of worlds in the universe; there are planets and suns many times greater than our sun. In such a universe there must be worlds without end. How can we conceive the creator and the ruler of such a universe? To my mind, all religions from the beginning until this day are man-created, and as such have their day, to be replaced with others more adaptable to the progress of the world. Fundamentally, nearly all religions, past and present, feature the same miracles. Every new religion has been forced to adopt its leading tenets from the older religions it has replaced.

I have my religion, believing in a supreme Being, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and my worship consists in studying the Creator's works and the wonders of creation. And when I die, I pass out without any thought of the future life. Civilized man has existed less than 10,000 years, and in that time, he has developed from a brute existence to the beautiful mechanized world that we have today, and I for one believe that there are greater wonders in store yet for the human race; and as we go along, century after century, our knowledge and beliefs will change. We may be living now in the zenith of this world's development, and again we may be only in the beginning.

The good sister would have derived consolation from this concluding sentiment.

One fundamental idea—please give it a little thought—is this, that whatever is, whatever happens, whether by individuals, by nations or by Nature, is in consequence of the plan of the Universe, and this plan is God Almighty's plan. Finally, my practicing religion is the Golden Rule, which I consider the cardinal teaching of all religions.

A more recent expression—two years later—of Mr. Thieme's fundamental philosophy appears in a memorandum which he wrote November 14, 1940. Here he draws upon history in support of his belief in a theory of cause and effect.

I have flirted a great deal with the idea that when the time was ripe some divine force entered the brain of a Beethoven, a Raphael, a Napoleon, and led them to carry out the mission for which they are known. On the other hand, when we go back to the cause and effect theory, we realize that it required certain ancestors, living under certain conditions, inspired by certain economic forces to produce a Mozart, a Raphael, a Napoleon, under such conditions and such environment as to force them unconsciously to play their distinguishing little part in the world. Without a weak nature, poverty, complete ignorance of all accomplishments excepting music, Mozart might not have been one of the world's greatest musical composers. We find a like situation with other great figures of history. Each was a product of his time and probably could not have functioned in any other period. Was it divine intervention, or Nature's law of cause and effect?

It is natural that he should make comment in this connection upon the mysterious functioning of the human mind.

We often hear of divine sparks entering certain minds. You probably have at times felt that super-natural thought entered your mind. But I believe this is largely due to our lack of knowledge of the human mind. The brain, after all, is the most wonderful of nature's creations in this world; and it is so complicated that we perhaps never will be able to analyze it correctly.

The comments conclude fittingly with a reiteration of

his belief in Nature—a belief, that is so profound as to constitute the basis of his religion.

My religion is a belief in Nature and natural forces, which are pure and undefiled. But we understand very little as yet, because of the fact that intelligent man is so young on this planet. We would all like to talk it over again a thousand years from now. Much of our misunderstanding is due to the fact—and it is necessary that it be so —that all living things on this earth are occupied primarily with their own existence.

Along with his habit of profound contemplation, Mr. Thieme enjoys reading philosophical literature and draws inspiration from it. Recently (January 21, 1941) he indulged in discriminating comment concerning the following well-known lines of Pope's "Essay on Man".

All nature is but art; unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good.
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is right.'

We can gain an insight into his philosophy of creation from his reflections upon this literary gem. He said of it in part:

I think the passage is beautiful, comprehensive, but the last line requires some explanation from my point of view. "Whatever is, is right." If Pope refers to the fundamental law governing the Creator's plan of the universe, then whatever is, is right; but if this dictum is applied to the actions between individuals, then we have a different proposition. My conception of the plan of the universe envisions the Creator and Director of the whole universe to be omnipotent, all-wise, omniscient, the source of all life and of all forces. I assume, therefore, that when He created this world and planned the nature of its existence, it was planned as a finished job—no further tinkering, no changes, no additions.

From this primary basis, he launched upon a comprehensive discourse concerning man and his place in the universe:

While man is the subject of our greatest concern, because man is the only life we know of, endowed with intellect and all this implies in human beings, he is not everything. I believe, however, that man is the great objective of this world, around which all centers. By means of his brain, the most magnificent, the grandest, the least understood masterpiece of the Almighty in this world, MAN is gradually acquiring more knowledge, more intelligent power, to carry out his part in fulfilling his mission on this earth. In this brain are stored, awaiting development, hundreds of mental tools and appliances, which up to now have been the means of bringing the world so far—and evidently are intended by the Creator to shape man's existence to its end.

Although Mr. Thieme values scientific explanations and recognizes the operation of natural laws, he nevertheless ponders the concept of divine laws superseding natural laws. But realist that he is, he is unwilling to admit "any direct interference by supernatural power" over man's brain functioning. Disclaiming any divine intervention on the power to think, he places responsibility directly upon men to make the right use of their own mental tools.

I do not believe in any direct interference by supernatural power with any consequences of man's use of this brain power. The tools are in the brain and at work in maintaining a balance of forces, good and evil, with a slight preponderance of the good. The whole world may be at war now because of a temporary ascendancy of many evil forces, the effect of which developed this war; and in this war, forces again are operating which will show that the world has again made progress. Every manifestation of action whether good or evil, whether by man or by nature, is the effect of a cause or of causes. The multitude of brain tools working automatically control man's destiny in the world.

His frank disclosure of his own habits of thinking is especially interesting.

I have had what is called an analytical mind, perhaps getting its impetus with my study of analytical chemistry at college. Here is my excuse for thinking. It is no crime to think; it is in accordance with God's laws. Deep individual thinking hardly ever agrees with superficial, popular thinking; and often such thinkers as myself are considered "woozy." Fortunately, I am not a politician or a job-hunter

where uniformity of ideas is necessary, and therefore I can indulge my day-dreams. Nevertheless, my theories on the subject under consideration have a fine influence on my perception of life and of the Creator and Ruler of the universe whom we call "God." They enable me to indulge in happy moments of admiration and contemplation of the wonders of creation. Of course, we are not absolutely sure what is right and what is wrong in actions between men; we must distinguish between human actions directed by the human mind, obeying human fallible law and the judgment on actions emanating from operation of the divine infallible law.

His historic sense again asserts itself in this connection.

The result of individual thinking, he adds, will depend largely on that period of the world's history in which it is done. It is less than five hundred years ago that the world was considered to be flat; the great universe beyond was unknown, and thinking was different then from what it is today.

This particular line of thought automatically is an endorsement of the theory of evolution, as you can readily see and naturally is wholly opposed to the theory of the world's having been built in a day, a week or a year.

In these somewhat disjointed comments, the thoughtful reader cannot fail to gain a first hand view of Theodore Thieme, the thinker. There are inconsistencies in his philosophy; of that he is aware. But it is his own, something which his mental necessities have wrested out of the strife and vicissitudes of life to prevent the starvation of his spirit. And because it was evolved to fill a real need, it raises real philosophic questions and meditates their answers. He has ever been a man of independent thought. These voluntary expressions of his mature years reveal an earnest soul grappling courageously with the deepest concerns of life and destiny. It is significant that success in business has not stilled or satisfied an inquisitive mind.

In a final review of all these comments he offered this modest admonition.

Don't take my observations too seriously. They are not preachments, nor are they positive affirmations. At best they represent only a feeble tinkering with the unsolvable mysteries of the universe.

However, the conclusion of his hope and faith is positive.

I am happy, supremely confident, and without fear for the future in allowing my mind to interpret Nature honestly and in the belief that a God, a Supreme Being, created and rules the Universe of which this Earth is a minor unit.

Turning to less fundamental contemplations, Mr. Thieme still enjoys keenly his active memories of the hosts of friends and associations in the different stages and activities of his life. Most of them—in fact, nearly all of his own first generation—have passed away, but they still live in his ardent recollections.

At the first commencement in 1924 of the Art School, speaking upon the subject, *The Road to Success,* he said in part:

As I look back over my trip on Life's road, I can truthfully say that I never lost sight of my knapsack and Old Man Work, although I constantly broke up the journey by entering little side-paths—some long, some short—bearing sign posts, reading "Rest, Recreation, and Diversion." I confess also that occasionally I entered mysterious caves, followed strange voices, and climbed dangerous cliffs, but always remembered my way back and returned before it was too late.

Remember this, that SUCCESS is not to be found at the end of any of these by-paths, but only in the Highway.

He is still pursuing the great Highway, and in his ripened contemplation, it is broadening and growing more beautiful. It is worthy of emphasis that although he commended many diversions along the way, such as he has enjoyed himself, yet he never failed to give the utmost stress to "work" as the main essential. To keep at work is to keep the main highway—the road to success. Commenting upon this recently, he said:

I attribute my success largely to work, hard work, consistent work, with confidence in my ability, my judgment, and persistence in striving for perfection in my undertakings.

I once displayed on my desk for a period, two old Latin phrases, which I considered symbolic of my activities:

"Labor omnia vincit." (Labor conquers all things)

"Labor ipse voluptas." (Labor itself is a pleasure)

He still has a quaint old chromo that his secretary furnished for his office at the mills. It sets out two guiding principles:

"Blessed is he who has found his work."
"Twice blessed is he who is happy in his work."

Mr. Thieme promptly directed the secretary to add a third pithy sentence:

"Thrice blessed is he who does his work."

In his last summing up of his manifold responsibilities in the mills, he concluded with the sentence: "I carried the load and was happiest in my work." His hours of leisure in contented retirement have no happier memories than of his days and nights of arduous work all through his most constructive years.

In his hours of retrospection, he contemplates with pride and pleasure the series of cycles in which he has had an active part, representing a remarkable evolution in life and industry. Commenting on this, he says:

It is worth while noting that approximately the first thirty-five years of my life were spent in a world without electric lights, telephones, telegraph, automobiles, filling stations, parking lots, garages, movies, radios, phonographs, airplanes, modern heating and plumbing, hard and smooth roads, and the like.

People made their own entertainment, and the life of young people, especially, was wholly different from today. People spent about as much time at home in the evening then as they spend away from home today.

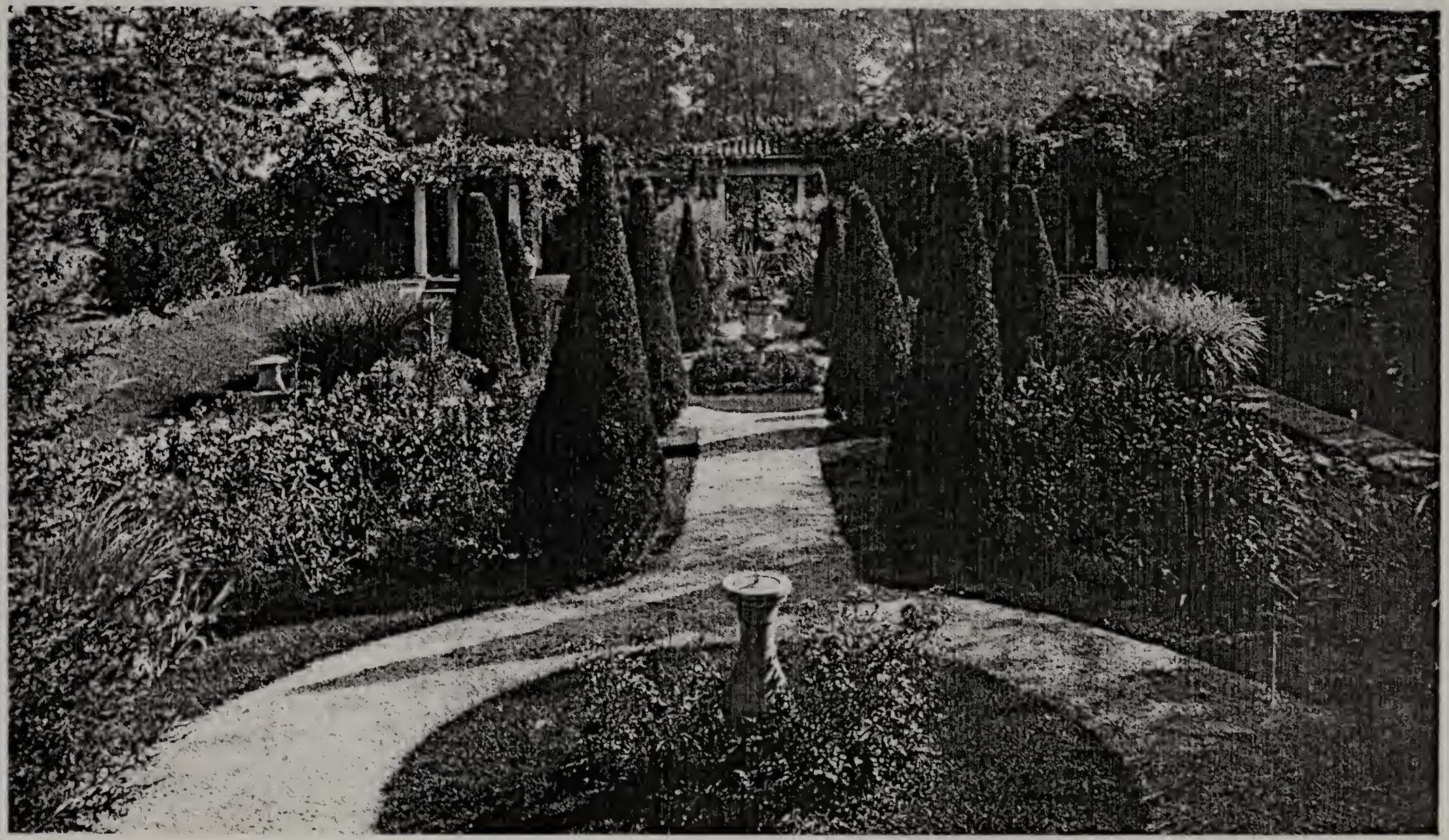
The era comprising my last half century, has brought creation of manufacturing industry, modern inventions, high wages, fixed prices in merchandising, department stores, and female clerks; street paving, public utilities, railroads, electric railways, mining, and oil wells; skyscrapers, modern home life with plumbing, central heating, electric refrigeration, and air conditioning; typewriters, adding machines, soda water, cocktail parlors, chewing gum, bathing suits, and fine hosiery; the opera, theaters, and numerous improvements that play such prominent parts in our life today.

Thieme Gardens is the choice retreat of Mr. and Mrs. Thieme in their happy retirement. This place, which was the old Rousseau farm, with a hundred years of history running back to Indian days, was chosen by Mr. Thieme in 1912 for conversion into a model country home after the European pattern. Situated almost four miles west of Fort Wayne on the Covington Road, adjoining the Country Club grounds, it was chosen because of its convenient location, its picturesque terrain with high ground rolling in easy grades and its fine variety of old trees. There are fourteen acres of residential park lying north of the old interurban right-of-way and twenty-five acres of rich prairie land on the south.

In this place Mr. Thieme found opportunity to indulge all his artistic bent with his general knowledge of European country homes. The residential park was landscaped according to scientific design with lawns, roads, and sidewalks; gardens, grape arbors and courts; hedges, flower beds, and well selected trees, interspersed with statues and symbols. There is a sunken garden, having a pergola with a tea pavilion in the center—all in artistic harmony, suggestive of grace and comfort as well as of rustic beauty. To appreciate Thieme Gardens, it is necessary to look upon it and to transverse its winding ways with an eye to all its artistic appointments. It has undergone constant improvement for more than a quarter of a century. Its care and development were in charge of a skilled English landscape gardener. Since their city residence became the Art School in 1922, Thieme Gardens has been the Thieme home at Fort Wayne. There, Mr. and Mrs. Thieme spend their summers, usually about four months of each year, since they have ceased foreign travel. The introductory chapter tells of their winter sojourns in Los Angeles.

In this home Mr. and Mrs. Thieme suffered a great sorrow in the accidental death of their beloved nephew, Clifton Loring Jr., whom they had taken at the age of two in 1918. He was the son of Mrs. Thieme's brother, Clifton Loring.

Thieme Gardens—Entrance Gate.



Thieme Gardens—Sunken Gardens.

A bright and handsome boy, with rare qualities of mind and heart, he had become most dear to them and his sudden death on August 23, 1933, after he had been struck by an automobile while riding a bicycle near the home, was as the loss of an own child. "Cliffie", as he was affectionately called, had just graduated from Elmhurst High School with high honors and was preparing for entrance to Purdue University.

In recent years, their son, Wayne, and his family have also occupied the commodious home at Thieme Gardens. Wayne was married to Mary Louise Rhamy of Fort Wayne in 1926. They have four children—the twins, Wayne, Jr. and Susanne Louise, fourteen years of age; Theodore William, eleven; and Philip Rhamy, six. The spacious country place is ideal for these fortunate children. It is particularly gratifying to Mr. Thieme that the only granddaughter, Susanne Louise, gives unusual promise in music.

In the contentment of these surroundings, chiefly of his own creation, Mr. Thieme spends pleasant summer days and nights among his books and paintings, as well as outdoors on the picturesque grounds. He gives many daylight hours to sauntering leisurely along the walks that he has planned. There are three main courses, each of which is lined with a score or more points of interest that he has designated on well marked paths. During the summer of 1940 he had a large room fitted up in the home as a little art salon for the display of choice paintings.

On each anniversary of his birth, since Mr. Thieme reached fourscore years, he has enjoyed special birthday parties. The climax of these up to this time was his eighty-fourth anniversary dinner at the Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles, February 7, 1941. On this occasion, Mr. and Mrs. Thieme entertained a host of friends and relatives throughout a delightful evening in the homelike quarters of the Wilshire. Most of the guests were from among their Los Angeles friends but there were several from distant places—among them, their son Wayne and family,

who came all the way from Fort Wayne to participate in the anniversary celebration. The evening included dinner and bridge and a joyous round of toasts and congratulations in recognition of the successful progress of the generous host to the eighty-fourth milestone on the highway of life. A large number of congratulatory messages, in the form of letters and telegrams from friends throughout the country were received and read.

To Mr. Thieme it was a double anniversary—the eighty-fourth anniversary of his birth and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Wayne Knitting Mills. He commented modestly, but very feelingly, upon the significance of the semi-centennial celebration of the start of his greatest achievement in life. His thoughts reverted in keen retrospection to his youthful vision that took form in 1891 in the humble beginning of the Wayne Knitting Mills as a new American industry in his home city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Every human detail of the successful development of this infant industry under his guiding and directing hand into the pioneer full-fashioned hosiery plant of the Western Hemisphere stood vividly forth in his awakened memories at this celebration of its full half century of existence. The multitude of obstacles overcome—transporting from the Old World, raising capital, securing machinery, providing and training skilled labor, improving the product, finding a market, establishing a trademark, meeting competition, maintaining institutional morale—in short all the epoch-making struggles by which Wayne Knit became a premier brand of full-fashioned hosiery in America and thousands of people were made prosperous and happy in its production—passed in panoramic succession through his mind.

A unique birthday greeting in the form of a pretentious escutcheon was received from an old business acquaintance from Chicago. In recognition, in part, perhaps, of Mr. Thieme's artistic inclinations, this "Thieme Escutcheon" was very artistically designed, both in form and color as

an impressive token of appreciation and esteem. Here is the conclusion of an explanation that accompanied the escutcheon:

> Thus, good friend, you have my observation of your observation of your eighty-fourth milestone, and with it go my hopes that you have the zest to step gingerly over it as though it were but an oversized pebble on the bank of the meandering stream called LIFE.

But this biographical treatise upon the life and time of Theodore F. Thieme is not to be closed with the solemn, though inspiring, sentiments of the eighty-fourth anniversary of his birth; for the soberness of spirit that might be expected to attend the passing of that advanced milestone does not wholly prevail in him. This was attested very naturally at an informal luncheon some days after the anniversary. Entertaining two intimate friends, he ordered delicious foods and choice vintages as was his wont. While awaiting the food menu, he raised his glass in an offhand manner and with twinkling eyes and a comical smile, muttered in a sort of metrical cadence a few lines of rhythmical jargon.

> Hic haec hoc,
> Sic semper tyrannis
> E pluribus unum
> Let her go gallagher,
> The tail goes with the hide,
> Drink her down!

His face beamed with good humor as he recalled that he had ejaculated those gibberish lines innumerable times through many decades. The significance of this meaningless jumble of classicism and slang, taken in connection with the carefree associations it recalled, brought memories of days long past. The spirit of these lighthearted associations was still strong within him.

And so, let us leave him enjoying the zest and the best of life, full of a love of pastime and play, long years after the hard work of life is over.